THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Volume 200, Number 15

OCT. 8, 1927

5cts.

Arthur Conan Doyle — F. Scott Fitzgerald — Horatio Winslow — Hal G. Evarts
Nunnally Johnson — Henry L. Stimson — Thomas Beer — Ben Ames Williams

Published Weekly

The Curtis Publishing Company

Cyrus H. K. Curtis, President

C. H. Ludington, Vice-President and Treasurer
P. S. Collins, General Business Manager
Walter D. Fuller, Secretary
William Boyd, Advertising Director

Independence Square, Philadelphia

London: 6, Henrietta Street
Covent Garden, W.C.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Founded A^o D^i 1728 *by* Benj. Franklin

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Entered as Second-Class Matter, November 18, 1879, at the Post Office at Philadelphia, Under Act of March 3, 1879. Additional Entry at Columbus, O., St. Louis, Mo., Chicago, Ill., Indianapolis, Ind., Saginaw, Mich., Des Moines, Ia., Portland, Ore., Milwaukee, Wis., St. Paul, Minn., San Francisco, Cal., Kansas City, Mo., Savannah, Ga., Denver, Colo., Louisville, Ky., Houston, Tex., Omaha, Neb., Ogden, Utah, Jacksonville, Fla., New Orleans, La., Portland, Me., Los Angeles, Cal., Richmond, Va., Boston, Mass.

Volume 200 | 5c. THE COPY | PHILADELPHIA, PA., OCTOBER 8, 1927 | $2.00 By Subscription (52 issues) | Number 15

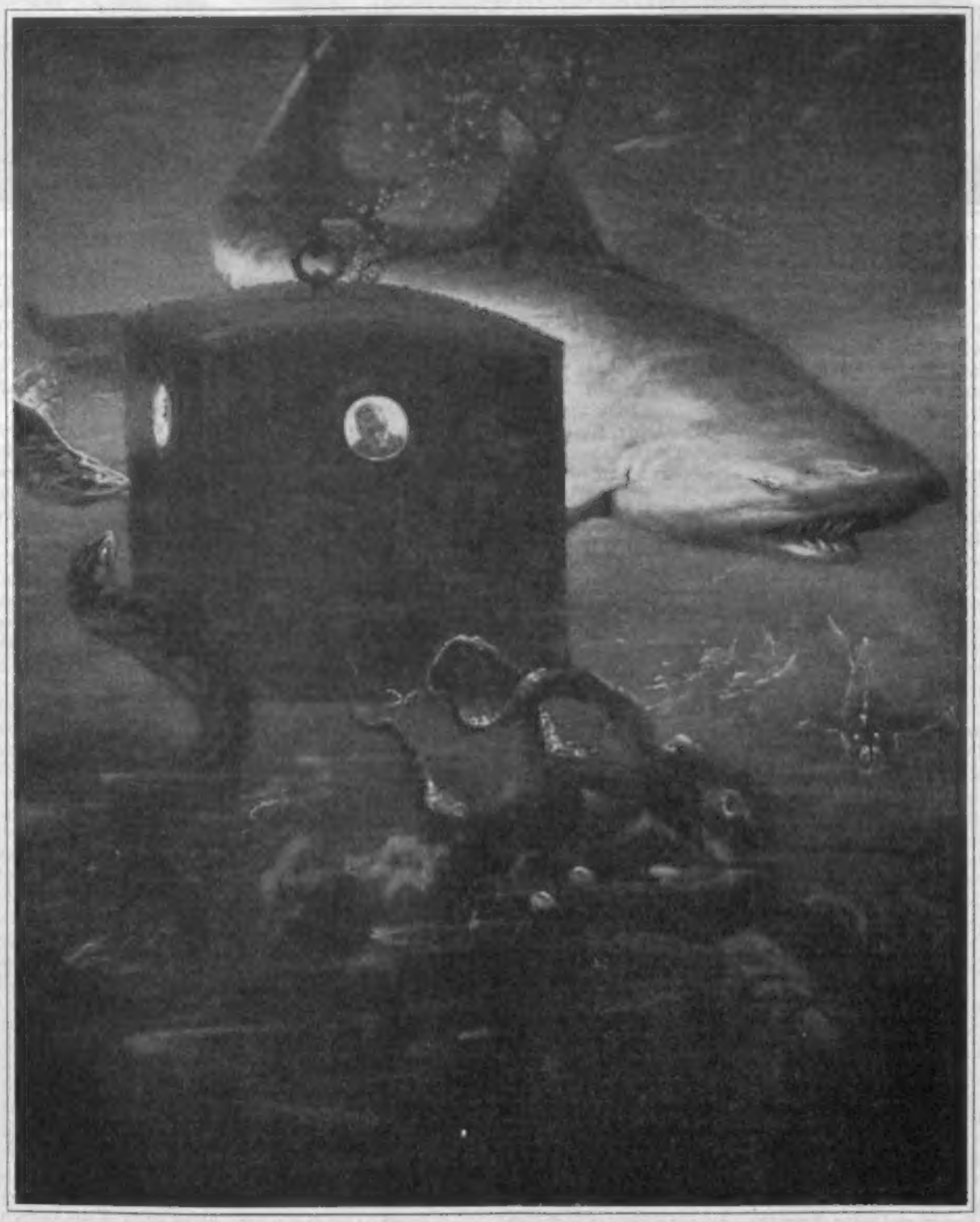
MARACOT DEEP

By Arthur Conan Doyle

ILLUSTRATED BY ANTON OTTO FISCHER

SINCE these papers have been put into my hands to edit, I will begin by reminding the public of the sad loss of the steamship Stratford, which started a year ago upon a voyage for the purpose of oceanography and the study of deep-sea life. The expedition had been organized by Doctor Maracot, the famous author of Pseudo-Coralline Formations and the Morphology of the Lamellibranchs. Doctor Maracot had with him Mr. Cyrus Headley, formerly assistant at the Zoölogical Institute of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and at the time of the voyage Rhodes scholar at Oxford. Captain Howie, an experienced navigator, was in charge of the vessel, and there was a crew of twenty-three men, including an American mechanic from the Merribank Works, Philadelphia.

This whole party has utterly disappeared, and the only word ever heard of the ill-fated steamer was from the report of a Norwegian bark which actually saw a ship closely corresponding with her description go down in the great gale of the autumn of 1926. A lifeboat marked Stratford was found later in the neighborhood of the tragedy, together with some deck gratings, a life buoy and a spar. This, coupled with the long silence, seemed to make it absolutely sure that the vessel and her crew would never be heard of more. Her fate is rendered more certain by the strange wireless message received at the time, which, though incomprehensible in parts, left little doubt as to the fate of the vessel. This I will quote later.



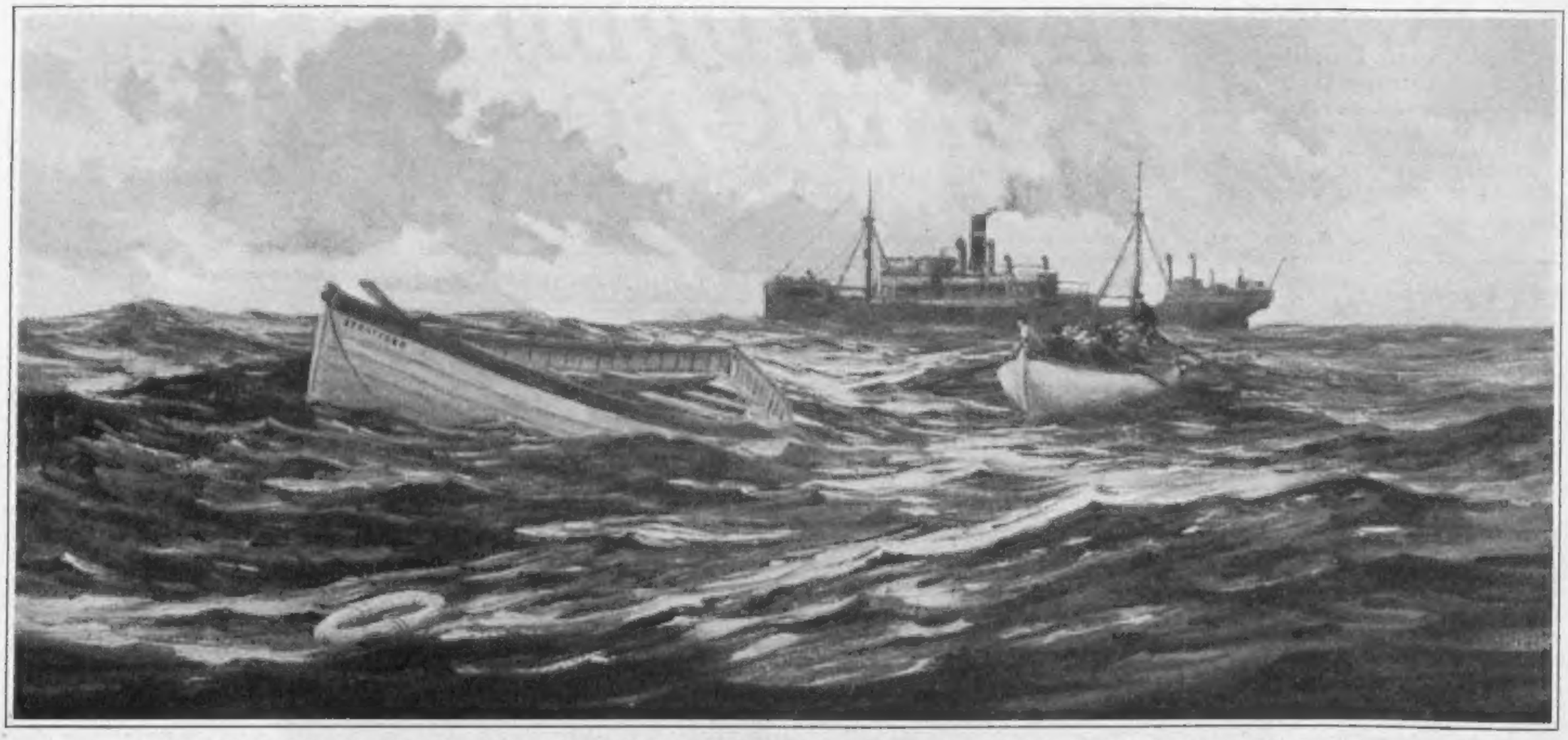
At Fifteen Hundred Feet We Stopped and Swung in Mid-Ocean, With Our Lights Blazing Once More

There were some remarkable points about the voyage of the Stratford which caused comment at the time. One was the curious secrecy observed by Professor Maracot. He was famous for his dislike and distrust of the press, but it was pushed to an extreme upon this occasion, when he would neither give information to reporters nor would he permit the representative of any paper to set foot in the vessel during the weeks that it lay in the Albert Dock. There were rumors abroad of some curious and novel construction of the ship which would fit it for deep-sea work, and these rumors were confirmed from the yard of Hunter & Co., of West Hartlepool, where the structural changes had actually been carried out. It was at one time said that the whole bottom of the vessel was detachable, a report which attracted the attention of the underwriters at Lloyd's, who were, with some difficulty, satisfied upon the point. The matter was soon forgotten, but it assumes an importance now when the fate of the expedition has been brought once more in so extraordinary a manner to the notice of the public.

So much for the beginning of the voyage of the Stratford. There are now four documents which cover the facts so far as they are known. The first is the letter which was written by Mr. Cyrus Headley from the capital of the Grand Canary, to his friend, Sir James Talbot, of Trinity College, Oxford, upon the only occasion, so far as is known, when the Stratford touched land after leaving the Thames. The second is the strange wireless call to which I have alluded. The third is that portion of the log of the Arabella Knowles which deals with the vitreous ball. The fourth and last is the amazing contents of that receptacle, which either represent a most cruel and complex mystification or else open up a fresh chapter in human experience the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. With this preamble, I will now give Mr. Headley's letter, which I owe to the courtesy of Sir James Talbot, and which has not previously been published. It is dated October 1, 1926:

"I am mailing this, my dear Talbot, from Porta de la Luz where we have put in for a few days of rest. My principal companion in the voyage has been Bill Scanlan, the head mechanic, who, as a fellow countryman and also as a very entertaining character, has become my natural associate. However, I am alone this morning, as he has what he describes as a date with a skirt. You see, he talks as Englishmen expect every real American to talk. He would be accepted as the true breed. The mere force of suggestion makes me 'guess' and 'reckon' when I am with my English friends. I feel that they would never really understand that I was a Yankee if I did not. However, I am not on those terms with you, so let me assure you right now that you will not find anything but pure Oxford in the epistle which I am now mailing to you.

"You met Maracot at the Mitre, so you know the dry chip of a man that he is. I told you, I think, how he came to pitch upon me for the job. He inquired from old Somerville, of the Zoölogical Institute, who sent him my prize essay on the pelagic



A Lifeboat Marked Stratford Was Found Later in the Neighborhood of the Tragedy, Together With Some Deck Gratings, a Life Buoy and a Spar

crabs, and that did the trick. Of course it is splendid to be on such a congenial errand, but I wish it wasn't with such an animated mummy as Maracot. He is inhuman in his isolation and his devotion to his work. 'The world's stiffest stiff,' says Bill Scanlan. And yet you can't but admire such complete devotion. Nothing exists outside his own science. I remember that you laughed when I asked him what I ought to read as a preparation, and he said that for serious study I should read the collected edition of his own works, but for relaxation Haeckel's Plankton-Studien.

"I know him no better now than I did in that little parlor looking out on the Oxford High. He says nothing, and his gaunt, austere face—the face of a Savonarola, or rather, perhaps, of a Torquemada—never relapses into geniality. The long, thin, aggressive nose; the two small, gleaming gray eyes set closely together under a thatch of eyebrows; the thin-lipped, compressed mouth; the cheeks worn into hollows by constant thought and ascetic life—are all uncompanionable. He lives on some mental mountain top, out of reach of ordinary mortals. Sometimes I think he is a little mad. For example, this extraordinary instrument that he has made —— But I'll tell things in their due order and then you can judge for yourself.

"I'll take our voyage from the start. The Stratford is a fine seaworthy little boat, specially fitted for her job. She is 1200 tons, with clear decks and a good broad beam, furnished with every possible appliance for sounding, trawling, dredging and tow-netting. She has, of course, powerful steam winches for hauling in the trawls, and a number of other gadgets of various kinds, some of which are familiar enough, and some are strange. Below these are comfortable quarters, with a well-fitted laboratory for our special studies.

"We had the reputation of being a mystery ship before we started, and I soon found that it was not undeserved. Our first proceedings were commonplace enough. We took a turn up the North Sea and dropped our trawls for a scrape or two; but as the average depth is not much over sixty feet, and we were specially fitted for very deep sea work, it seemed rather a waste of time. Anyhow, save for familiar table fish, dogfish, squids, jellyfish and some terrigenous bottom deposits of the usual alluvial clay mud, we got nothing worth writing home about. Then we rounded Scotland, sighted the Faroes and came down the Wyville Thomson Ridge, where we had better luck. Thence we worked south to our proper cruising ground, which was between the African coast and these islands. We nearly grounded on Fuerteventura one moonless night, but save for that our voyage was uneventful.

"During these first weeks I tried to make friends with Maracot, but it was not easy work. First of all, he is the most absorbed and absent-minded man in the world. You will remember how you smiled when he gave the elevator boy a penny under the impression that he was in a street car. Half the time he is utterly lost in his thoughts and seems hardly aware of where he is or what he is doing. Then, in the second place, he is secretive to the last degree. He is continually working at papers and charts which he shuffles away when I happen to enter the cabin. It is my firm belief that the man has some secret project in his mind, but that so long as we are due to touch at any port, he will keep it to himself. That is the impression which I have received and I find that Bill Scanlan is of the same opinion.

"'Say, Mr. Headley,' said he one evening when I was seated in the laboratory testing out the salinity of samples from our hydrographic soundings, 'what d'you figure out that this guy has in his mind? What d'you reckon that he means to do?'

"'I suppose,' said I, 'that we shall do what the Challenger and a dozen other exploring ships have done before us, and add a few more species to the list of fish and a few more entries to the bathymetric chart.'

"'Not on your life,' said he. "If that's your opinion, you've got to guess again. First of all, what am I here for anyhow?'

"'In case the machinery goes wrong,' I hazarded.

"'Machinery nothing! The ship's machinery is in charge of MacLaren, the Scotch engineer. No, sir, it wasn't to run a donkey engine that the Merribank folk sent out their star performer. If I pull down fifty bucks a week, it's not for nix. Come here, and I'll make you wise to it.'

"He took a key from his pocket and opened a door at the back of the laboratory, which led us down a companion ladder to a section of the hold which was cleared right across save for four large glittering objects half exposed amid the straw of their huge packing cases. They were flat sheets of steel, with elaborate bolts and rivets along the edges. Each sheet was about ten feet square and an inch and a half thick, with a circular gap of eighteen inches in the middle.

"'What in thunder is it?' I asked.

"Bill Scanlan's queer face—he looks halfway between a vaudeville comic and a prize fighter—broke into a grin at my astonishment.

"'That's my baby, sir,' he quoted. 'Yes, Mr. Headley, that's what I am here for. There is a steel bottom to the thing. It's in that big case yonder. Then there is a top, kind of arched, and a great ring for a chain or rope. Now look here at the bottom of the ship.'

"There was a square wooden platform there, with projecting screws at each corner which showed that it was detachable.

"'There is a double bottom,' said Scanlan. 'It may be that this guy is clean loco, or it may be that he has more in his block than we know; but if I read him right, he means to build up a kind of room—the windows are in storage here—and lower it through the bottom of the ship. He's got electric searchlights here, and I allow that he plans to shine 'em through the round portholes and see what's goin' on around.'

"'He could have put a crystal sheet into the ship, like the Catalina Island boats, if that was all that was in his mind,' said I.

"'You've said a mouthful,' said Bill Scanlan, scratching his head. 'I can't figger it out nohow. The only one sure thing is that I've been sent to be under his orders and to help him with the darn fool thing all I can. He has said nothin' up to now, so I've said the same; but I'll just snoop around, and if I wait long enough I'll learn all there is to know.'

"So that was how I first got onto the edge of our mystery. We ran into some dirty weather after that, and then we got to work doing some deep-sea trawling northwest of Cape Juba, just outside the Continental Slope, and taking temperature readings and salinity records. It's a sporting proposition, this deep-sea dragging with a Peterson otter trawl gaping twenty feet wide for everything that comes its way—sometimes down quarter of a mile and bringing up one lot of fish, sometimes half a mile and quite a different lot, every stratum of ocean with its own inhabitants as separate as so many continents.

"Sometimes from the bottom we would just bring up half a ton of clear pink jelly, the raw material of life; or maybe it would be a scoop of pteropod ooze, breaking up under the microscope into millions of tiny round reticulated balls with amorphous mud between. I won't bore you with all the brotulids and macrourids, the ascidians and Polyzoa and echinoderms—anyhow, you can reckon that there is a great harvest in the sea and that we have been diligent reapers. But always I had the same feeling that the heart of Maracot was not in the job and that other plans were in that queer, high, narrow Egyptian mummy of a head. It all seemed to me to be a try-out of men and things until the real business got going.

"I had got as far as this in my letter when I went ashore to have a last stretch, for we sail in the early morning. It's as well, perhaps, that I did go, for there was no end of a barney going on on the pier, with Maracot and Bill Scanlan right in the heart of it. Bill is a bit of a scrapper, and has what he calls a mean wallop in both mitts; but with half a dozen Dagos with knives all round them, things looked ugly and it was time that I butted in. It seems that the doctor had hired one of the things they call cabs and had driven half over the island, inspecting the geology, but had clean forgotten that he had no money on him. When it came to paying he could not make these country hicks understand and the cabman had grabbed his watch so as to make sure. That brought Bill Scanlan into action, and they would have both been on the floor with their backs like pincushions if I had not squared the matter up, with a dollar or two over for the driver and a five-dollar bonus for the chap with the mouse under his eye. So all ended well, and Maracot was more human than ever I saw him yet. When we got to the ship he called me into the little cabin which he reserves for himself and he thanked me.

"'By the way, Mr. Headley,' he said, 'I understand that you are not a married man.'

"'No,' said I, 'I am not.'

"'No one depending upon you?'

"'No.'

"'Good!' said he. 'I have not spoken of the object of this voyage, because I have, for my own reasons, desired it to be secret. One of those reasons was that I feared to be forestalled. But now we are on the eve of our great adventure and no rival has time to steal my plans. Tomorrow we start for our real goal.'

"'And what is that?' I asked.

"He leaned forward, his ascetic face all lit up with the enthusiasm of the fanatic. 'Our goal,' said he, 'is the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.'

"And right here I ought to stop, for I expect it has taken away your breath as it did mine. If I were a story writer I guess I should leave it at that. But as I am just a chronicler of what occurred, I may tell you that I stayed another hour in the cabin of old man Maracot and that I learned a lot which there is still just time for me to tell you before the last shore boat leaves.

"'Yes, young man,' said he, 'you may write freely now, for by the time your letter reaches England we shall have made the plunge.'

"This started him sniggering, for he has a queer, dry sense of humor of his own.

"'Yes, sir, "plunge" is the right word on this occasion—a plunge which will be historic in the annals of science. Let me tell you, in the first place, that I am well convinced that the current doctrine as to the extreme pressure of the ocean at great depths is entirely misleading. It is perfectly clear that other factors exist which neutralize the effect, though I am not yet prepared to say what those factors may be. That is one of the problems which we may settle. Now what pressure, may I ask, have you been led to expect under a mile of water?' He glowered at me through his big horn spectacles.

"'Not less than a ton to the square inch,' I answered. 'Surely that has been clearly shown.'

"'The task of the pioneer has always been to disprove the thing which has been clearly shown. Use your brains, young man. You have been for the last month fishing up some of the most delicate bathic forms of life, creatures so delicate that you could hardly transfer them from the net to the tank without marring their sensitive shapes. Did you find that there was evidence upon them of this extreme pressure?'

"'The pressure,' said I, 'equalized itself. It was the same within as without.'

"'Words—mere words!' he cried, shaking his lean head impatiently. 'You have brought up round fish, such fish as Gastrostomus globulus. Would they not have been squeezed flat had the pressure been as you imagine? Or look at our otter boards. They are not squeezed together at the mouth of the trawl.'

"'But the experience of divers?'

"'Certainly it holds good up to a point. They do find a sufficient increase of pressure to influence what is perhaps the most sensitive organ of the body—the interior of the ear. But as I plan it, we shall not be exposed to any pressure at all. We shall be lowered in a steel cage, with crystal windows on each side for observation. If the pressure is not strong enough to break in an inch and a half of toughened double-nickeled steel, then it cannot hurt us. It is an extension of the experiment of the Williamson Brothers at Nassau, with which no doubt you are familiar. If my calculation is wrong—well, you say that no one is dependent upon you—we shall die in a great adventure. Of course if you would rather stand clear, I can go alone.'

"It seemed to me the maddest kind of scheme, and yet you know how difficult it is to refuse a dare. I played for time while I thought it over. 'How deep do you propose to go, sir?' I asked.

"He had a chart pinned upon the table, and he placed the end of his compasses upon a point which lies to the southwest of the Canaries. 'Last year I did some sounding in this part,' said he. 'There is a pit of great depth. We got twenty-five thousand feet there. I was the first to report it. Indeed, I trust that you will find it on the charts of the future as the Maracot Deep.'

"'You don't propose to descend into an abyss like that!'

"'No, no,' he answered, smiling. 'Neither our lowering chain nor our air tubes reach beyond half a mile. But I was going to explain to you that round this deep crevasse, which has no doubt been formed by volcanic forces long ago, there is a raised ridge, or narrow plateau, which is not more than three hundred fathoms under the surface.'

"'Three hundred fathoms! A third of a mile!'

"'Yes, roughly a third of a mile. It is my present intention that we shall be lowered in our little pressure-proof lookout station onto this submarine bank. There we shall make such observations as we can. A speaking tube will connect us with the ship so that we can give our directions. There should be no difficulty in the matter. When we wish to be hauled up we have only to say so.'

"'And the air?'

"'Will be pumped down to us.'

"'But it will be pitch dark.'

"'That, I fear, is undoubtedly true. The experiments of Fol and Sarasin at the Lake of Geneva show that even the ultraviolet rays are absent at that depth. But does it matter? We shall be provided with the powerful electric illumination from the ship's engines, supplemented by six two-volt Hellesens dry cells connected together so as to give a current of twelve volts. That, with an army signaling lamp as a movable reflector should serve our turn. . . . Any other difficulties?'

"'If our air lines tangle?'

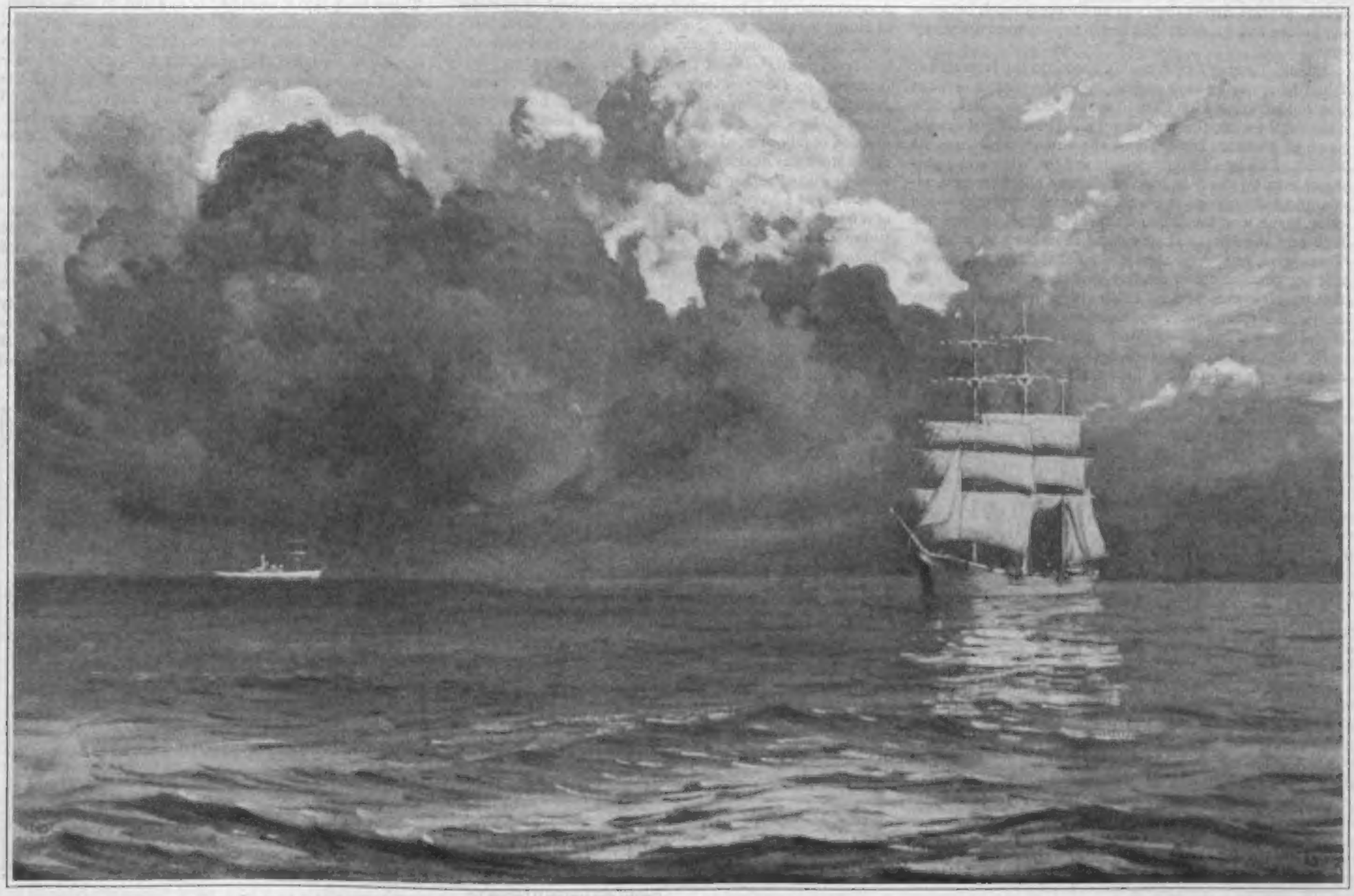
"'They won't tangle. And as a reserve, we have compressed air in tubes which would last us twenty-four hours. . . . Well, have I satisfied you? Will you come?'

"It was not an easy decision. The brain works quickly and imagination is a mighty vivid thing. I seemed to realize that black box down in the primeval depths, to feel the foul twice-breathed air, and then to see the walls sagging, bulging inward, rending at the joints, with the water spouting in at every rivet hole and crevice and crawling up from below. It was a slow, dreadful death to die. But I looked up and there were the old man's fiery eyes fixed upon me with the exaltation of a martyr to science. It's catching, that sort of enthusiasm; and if it be crazy, it is at least noble and unselfish. I caught fire from his great flame and I sprang to my feet with my hand out. 'Doctor, I'm with you to the end,' said I.

"'I knew it,' said he. 'It was not for your smattering of learning that I picked you, my young friend, nor,' he added, smiling, 'for your intimate acquaintance with the pelagic crabs. There are other qualities which may be more immediately useful, and they are loyalty and courage.'

"So, with that little bit of sugar, I was dismissed, with my future pledged and my whole scheme of life in ruins. . . . Well, the last shore boat is leaving. They are calling for the

(Continued on Page 142)



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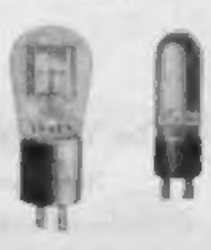

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MARACOT DEEP

(Continued from Page 5)

mail. You will either not hear from me again, my dear Talbot, or you will get a letter worth reading. If you don't hear, you can have a floating headstone made and drop it somewhere south of the Canaries, with the inscription:

"Here or hereabouts lies all that the fishes have left of my friend
"J. CYRUS HEADLEY."

The second document in the case is the unintelligible wireless message which was intercepted by several vessels, including the Royal Mail steamer Arroya. It was received at three P.M., October 3, 1926, which shows that it was dispatched only two days after the Stratford left the Grand Canary, as shown in the previous letter, and it corresponds roughly with the time when the Norwegian bark saw a steamer founder in a cyclone two hundred miles to the southwest of Porta de la Luz. It ran thus:

Blown on our beam ends. Fear position hopeless. Have already lost Maracot, Headley, Scanlan. Situation incomprehensible. Headley handkerchief end of deep sea sounding wire. God help us. STRATFORD.

This was the incoherent last message which came from the ill-fated vessel, and part of it was so strange that it was put down to delirium on the part of the operator. It seemed, however, to leave no doubt as to the fate of the ship.

The explanation—if it can be accepted as an explanation—of the matter is to be found in the narrative concealed inside the vitreous ball, and first it would be as well to amplify the very brief account which has hitherto appeared in the press of the finding of the ball. I take it verbatim from the log of the Arabella Knowles, master, Amos Green, outward bound with coal from Cardiff to Buenos Aires:

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 1927. Lat. 27:14 north. Long. 28 west. Calm weather. Blue sky, with low strata of cirrus clouds. Sea like glass. At two bells of the middle watch the first officer reported that he had seen a shining object bound high out of the sea and then fall back into it. His first impression was that it was some strange fish, but on examination with his glasses he observed that it was a silvery globe or ball which was so light that it lay rather than floated on the surface of the water. I was called and saw it, as large as a football, gleaming brightly about half a mile off on our starboard beam. I stopped the engines and called away the quarter boat under the second mate, who picked the thing up and brought it aboard.

On examination it proved to be a ball made of some sort of very tough glass, and filled with a substance so light that when it was tossed in the air it wavered about like a child's balloon. It was nearly transparent, and we could see what looked like a roll of paper inside it. The material was so tough, however, that we had the greatest possible difficulty in breaking the ball open and getting at the contents. A hammer would not crack it and it was only when the chief engineer nipped it in the throw of the engine that we were able to smash it. Then I am sorry to say that it dissolved into sparkling dust, so that it was impossible to collect any good-sized piece for examination. We got the paper, however; and having examined it and concluded that it was of great importance, we laid it aside with the intention of handing it over to the British consul when we reached the Plate River. Man and boy, I have been at sea for five and thirty years, but this is the strangest thing that ever befell me, and so says every man aboard this ship. I leave the meaning of it all to wiser heads than mine.

So much for the genesis of the narrative of Cyrus Headley, which we will now give exactly as written:

"Whom am I writing to? Well, I suppose I may say to the whole wide world, but as that is rather a vague address, I'll aim at my friend Sir James Talbot, of Oxford University, for the reason that my last letter was to him, and this may be regarded as a continuation. I expect the odds are one hundred to one that this ball, even if it should see the light of day and not be gulped by a shark in passing, will toss about on the waves and never catch the eye of the passing sailor; and yet it's worth trying, and Maracot is sending up another, so between us it may be that we shall get our wonderful story to the world. Whether the world will believe it is another matter, I guess; but when folk look at the ball with its vitrine cover and note its contents of levigen gas, they will surely see for themselves that there is something here that is out of the ordinary. You, at any rate, Talbot, will not throw it aside unread.

"If anyone wants to know how the thing began, and what we were trying to do, he can find it all in a letter I wrote you on October first last year, the night before we left Porta de la Luz. By George, if I had known what was in store for us, I think I should have sneaked into a shore boat that night! And yet—well, maybe, even with my eyes open, I would have stood by the doctor and seen it through. On second thought, I have not a doubt that I would.

"Well, starting from the day that we left Grand Canary, I will carry on with my experiences.

"The moment we were clear of the port, old man Maracot fairly broke into flames. The time for action had come at last and all the damped-down energy of the man came flaring up. I tell you he took hold of that ship and of everyone and everything in it and bent it all to his will. The dry, creaking, absent-minded scholar had suddenly vanished and instead there emerged a human electrical machine, crackling with vitality and quivering from the great driving force within. His eyes gleamed behind his glasses like flames in a lantern. He seemed to be everywhere at once, working out distances on his chart, comparing reckonings with the skipper, driving Bill Scanlan along, setting me onto a hundred odd jobs, but it was all full of method and with a definite end. He developed an unexpected knowledge of electricity and of mechanics and spent much of his time working at the machinery, which Scanlan, under his supervision, was now carefully piecing together.

"'Say, Mr. Headley, it's just dandy,' said Bill, on the morning of the second day. 'Come in here and have a look. The doc is a regular fellow and a whale of a slick mechanic.'

"I had a most unpleasant impression that it was my own coffin at which I was gazing, but even so, I had to admit that it was a very adequate mausoleum. The floor had been clamped to the four steel walls and the porthole windows screwed into the center of each. A small trapdoor at the top gave admission, and there was a second one at the base. The steel cage was supported by a thin but very powerful steel hawser, which ran over a drum and was paid out or rolled in by the strong engine which we used for our deep-sea trawls. The hawser, as I understood, was nearly half a mile in length, the slack of it coiled round bollards on the deck. The rubber breathing tubes were of the same length, and the telephone wire was connected with them, and also the wire by which the electric lights within could be operated from the ship's batteries, though we had an independent installment as well.

"It was on the evening of that day that the engines were stopped. The glass was low and a thick black cloud rising upon the horizon gave warning of coming trouble. The only ship in sight was a bark flying the Norwegian colors, and we observed that it was reefed down, as if expecting trouble. For the moment, however, all was propitious and the Stratford rolled gently upon a deep blue ocean, white-capped here and there from the breath of the trade wind. Bill Scanlan came to me in my laboratory with more show of excitement than his easy-going temperament had ever permitted him to show.

"'Looka here, Mr. Headley,' said he, 'they've lowered that contraption into a

(Continued on Page 145)

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well in the bottom of the ship. D'you figure that the boss is going down in it?'

"'Certain sure, Bill. And I am going with him.'

"'Well, well, you are sure bughouse, the two of you, to think of such a thing. But I'd feel a cheap skate if I let you go alone.'

"'It is no business of yours, Bill.'

"'Well, I just feel that it is. Sure I'd be as yellow as a Chink with the jaundice if I let you go alone. Merribanks sent me here to look after the machinery, and if the machinery is down at the bottom of the sea, then it's a sure thing that it's me for the bottom. Where those steel castings are—that's the address of Bill Scanlan, whether the folk round him are crazy or no.'

"It was useless to argue with him, so one more was added to our little suicide club and we just waited for our orders.

"All night they were hard at work upon the fittings, and it was after an early breakfast that we descended into the hold ready for our adventure. The steel cage had been half lowered into the false bottom, and we now descended one by one through the upper trapdoor, which was closed and screwed down behind us, Captain Howie with a most lugubrious face having shaken hands with each of us as we passed him. We were then lowered a few more feet, the shutter drawn above our heads and the water admitted to test how far we were really seaworthy. The cage stood the trial well, every joint fitted exactly and there was no sign of any leakage. Then the lower flap in the hold was loosened and we hung suspended in the ocean beneath the level of the keel.

"It was really a very snug little room, and I marveled at the skill and foresight with which everything had been arranged. The electric illumination had not been turned on, but the semitropical sun shone brightly through the bottle-green water at either porthole. Some small fish were flickering here and there, streaks of silver against the green background. Inside, there was a settee round the little room, with a bathymetric dial, a thermometer and other instruments ranged above it. Beneath the settee was a row of pipes which represented our reserve supply of compressed air in case the tubes should fail us. Those tubes opened out above our heads and the telephonic apparatus hung beside them. We could all hear the mournful voice of the captain outside.

"'Are you really determined to go?' he asked.

"'We are quite all right,' the doctor answered impatiently. 'You will lower slowly and have someone at the receiver all the time. I will report conditions. When we reach the bottom, remain as you are until I give instructions. It will not do to put too much strain upon the hawser, but a slow movement of a couple of knots an hour should be well within its strength. And now—lower away!'

"He yelled out the two words with the scream of a lunatic. It was the supreme moment of his life, the fruition of all his brooding dreams. For an instant I was shaken by the thought that we were really in the power of a cunning, plausible monomaniac. Bill Scanlan had the same thought, for he looked across at me with a rueful grin and touched his forehead. But after that one wild outburst, our leader was instantly his sober, self-contained self once more. Indeed, one had but to look at the order and forethought which showed in every detail around us to be reassured as to the power of his mind.

"But now all our attention was diverted to the wonderful new experience which every instant was providing. Slowly the cage was sinking into the depths. The light-green water turned to dark-olive. That again deepened into a wonderful blue, a rich deep blue gradually thickening to a dusky purple. Lower and lower we sank—a hundred feet—two hundred—three hundred. The valves were acting to perfection. Our breathing was as free and natural as upon the deck of the vessel. Slowly the bathymeter needle moved round the luminous dial—four hundred—five hundred—six hundred. 'How are you?' roared an anxious voice from above us.

"'Nothing could be better!' cried Maracot in reply. But the light was failing. There was now only a dim gray twilight, which rapidly changed to utter darkness. 'Stop her!' shouted our leader. We ceased to move and hung suspended at seven hundred feet below the surface of the ocean. I heard the click of the switch and the next instant we were flooded with glorious golden light which poured out through each of our side windows and sent long glimmering vistas into the waste of waters round us. With our faces against the thick glass, each at his own porthole, we gazed out into such a prospect as man had never seen.

"Up to now we had known these strata by the sight of the few fish that had been too slow to avoid our clumsy trawl or too stupid to escape a dragnet. Now we saw the wonderful world of water as it really was.

"If the object of creation was the production of man, it is strange that the ocean is so much more populous than the land. Broadway on a Saturday night, Lombard Street on a week-day afternoon, is not more crowded than the great sea spaces which lay before us.

"We had passed those surface strata where fish are either colorless or of the true maritime tints of ultramarine above and silver below. Here there were creatures of every conceivable tint and form which pelagic life can show. Delicate leptocephali, or eel larvæ, shot like streaks of burnished silver across the tunnel of radiance. The slow snakelike form of Muræna, the deep-sea lamprey, writhed and twisted by; or the black cerata, all spikes and mouth, gaped foolishly back at our peering faces.

"Sometimes it was the squat cuttlefish which drifted across and glanced at us with human sinister eyes; sometimes it was some crystal-clear pelagic form of life which lent a flowerlike charm to the scene. One huge caranx, or horse mackerel, butted savagely again and again against our window until the dark shadow of a seven-foot shark came across him and he vanished into the gaping jaws.

"Doctor Maracot sat entranced, his notebook upon his knee, scribbling down his observations and keeping up a muttered monologue of scientific comment. 'What's that? What's that?' I would hear. 'Yes, yes, Chimæra mirabilis as taken by the Michael Sars. Dear me, there is Lepidion, but a new species, as I should judge. Surely that is Mora, but with an elongated pectoral which is worth noting. Observe that Macrura, Mr. Headley; its coloring is quite different from what we get in the net.'

"Once only was he taken quite aback. It was when a long oval object shot with great speed past his window from above and left a vibrating tail behind it which extended as far as we could see above us and below. I admit that I was as puzzled for the moment as the doctor, and it was Bill Scanlan who solved the mystery.

"'I guess that boob John Sweeney has heaved his lead alongside of us. Kind of a joke, maybe, to prevent us from feeling lonesome.'

"'To be sure! To be sure!' said Maracot, sniggering. 'Plumbus longicaudatus—a new genus, Mr. Headley, with a piano-wire tail and lard in its nose. But, indeed, it is very necessary they should take soundings so as to keep above the bank, which is circumscribed in size. All well, captain!' he shouted. 'You may drop us down.'

"And down we went. Doctor Maracot turned off the electric light and all was pitch darkness once more save for the bathymeter's luminous face, which ticked off our steady fall. There was a gentle sway, but otherwise we were hardly conscious of any motion. Only that moving hand upon the dial told us of our terrific, our inconceivable position. Now we were at the thousand-foot level and the air had become distinctly foul. Scanlan oiled the

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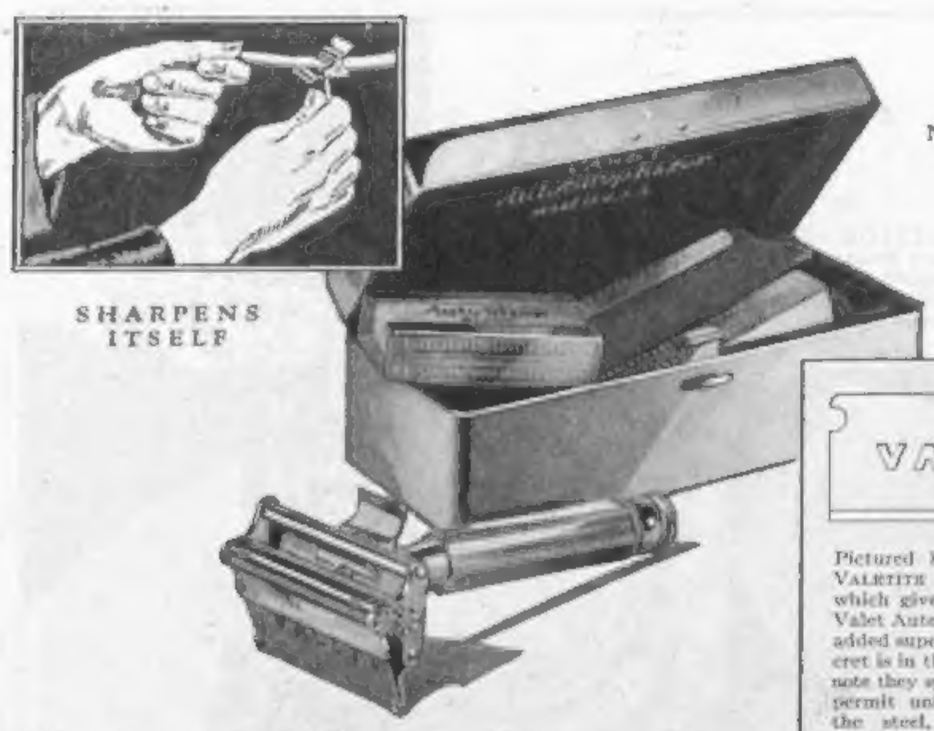

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valve of the discharge tube and things were better.

"At fifteen hundred feet we stopped and swung in mid-ocean, with our lights blazing once more. Some great dark mass passed us here, but whether swordfish or deep-sea shark or monster of unknown breed was more than we could determine. The doctor hurriedly turned off the lights. 'There lies our chief danger,' said he; 'there are creatures in the deep before whose charge this steel-plated room would have as much chance as a beehive before the rush of a rhinoceros.'

"'Whales, maybe,' said Scanlan.

"'Whales may sound to a great depth,' the savant answered. 'A Greenland whale has been known to take out nearly a mile of line in a perpendicular dive. But unless hurt or badly frightened, no whale would descend so low. It may have been a giant squid. They are found at every level.'

"'Well, I guess squids are too soft to hurt us. The laugh would be with the squid if he could claw a hole in Merribank's nickel steel.'

"'Their bodies may be soft,' the professor answered, 'but the beak of a large squid would sheer through a bar of iron, and one peck of that beak might go through these inch-thick windows as if they were parchment.'

"'Gee-whittaker!' cried Bill, as we began to sink once more upon our journey.

"And then at last, quite softly and gently, we came to rest. So delicate was the impact that we should hardly have known of it had it not been that the light when turned on showed great coils of the hawser all around us. The wire was a danger to our breathing tubes, for it might foul them, and at the urgent cry of Maracot it was pulled taut from above once more. The dial marked eighteen hundred feet. We lay motionless on a volcanic ridge at the bottom of the Atlantic."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

DETOUR

(Continued from Page 13)

anybody, it's me. It wan't Dave that done it. It was always him with me. It never was you, never could have been."

"It'll be him," said Brad gloomily, "when I come up with him."

Ernest was sweating. "I'm driving through," he explained, desperately, "in an automobile. I came to get ——"

"Oh-h-h-h!" she whispered, in a tone like a sob.

"I'll wait till he gits here," Brad declared.

"You knew I'd have him, Brad," she pleaded. "That's how you come to burn his barn and all. To git even with him. You knew I'd never take you."

"I'll burn him this here time," he said implacably. He hiccuped again, and Ernest remembered Mrs. Muster, and his fears of her overcame his other fears. He swung back toward the man.

"Listen," he told Brad. "You're in the way here. I've a favor to ask and you're interrupting. Go on your way. You're annoying this lady."

Brad cackled. "Lady?" he repeated. "Hear that, Jen!"

"Go on your way," Ernest bade him. He was no man of violence, but immunity for these few minutes had made him bold. "Be off with you!"

The drunk man stared at him, and Ernest was hot and impatient. Brad's eyes fell at last and he turned aside, still grinning. "All right," he agreed. "I'll move on." He drifted unsteadily toward the road, turned there. "Jen," he called, "tell Dave I'll be 'round again! Tell Dave to look for me!" He brandished the gun and then he moved off up the hill.

Ernest nodded, and he turned to the woman. "Now," he said, "if you please ——"

But she caught at him, tugged at him, drew him into the kitchen. He stood uncertainly. She had thrust the door shut behind them, stood now with her shoulders set against it. Her head was thrown back and her eyes were closed, and she swayed a little. Ernest thought she would faint; he moved toward her.

"Wait," she whispered. "Wait. You got to stay."

Ernest thought of Mrs. Muster, but he could not very well put this distracted woman aside. So he waited doubtfully for her to speak once more.

Ernest was a man whose life had been demure; Mrs. Muster would have said that her husband was as phlegmatic as an egg. But just now Ernest did not feel phlegmatic. He was, as a matter of fact, in some confusion. There were stirrings in him which sought to make themselves evident, which sought to shatter the calm surface of his life, which strove to throw him into violent and sudden action. He had tried conscientiously to keep calm, to bear himself intently toward the accomplishment of the errand which had brought him here. But he had been frightened and irritated and angry, and now he was profoundly shaken by some new emotion. The woman stood before him piteously, crouching a little, sagging there against the door; and she rubbed with her palm the wrist of her right arm, and he saw a bruise there. Then she opened her eyes and discovered that he was watching her, and she said in an explanatory tone:

"He catched me when I come to the door. He had me by the hand and I banged the door on it."

Ernest swallowed hard and clung to commonplace. "I have to get a bucket of water," he told her. "Our radiator has gone dry. I have to get water."

She leaned aside to peer out of the window; then she opened the door and stepped outside to look along the road. Ernest followed her protestingly.

"I need a pail of water," he repeated. She looked up the pitch where the road climbed to the ridge above the farm. "I've got to hurry," he insisted.

"It don't look like he'd get over the hill so quick," she said half to herself, doubtfully.

"Listen," he urged, faintly irritated. "Listen to me."

She swung to him then, as though she were for the first time fully conscious of the fact that he was a stranger; that to him all this must be mystery.

She swung to him and shook her head, and after a moment she said doubtfully, "You'd ought to stay till Joe gets here."

He had to steady his voice, cling to common things. It was hard for him. "Listen," he said carefully. "I don't know anything about Joe, or you, or anybody. My car is stuck. I must have water. A bucket of water for the radiator. It's late, and we have to be in Bar Harbor by five. I just happened to stop here. It was the first house I came to."

"You drove him off," she remembered. "He won't come back long as you're here. I sent Charlie to fetch Joe."

He repeated helplessly, "I just want a bucket of water."

She nodded, seemed at last to hear him. "There's the well," she said. "I'll fetch a bucket." And went back into the house. He watched her go, but he stayed where he was—in the yard in front of the house. The well, he saw, was around by the shed. She came out through the shed to where it stood. Through the shed door and the windows behind, he could see that on the other side of the house and shed a veranda ran along, well above the ground. His eye swept through a far vista there, to distant, blue-veiled hills like mountains. He thought they must be the mountains by

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

An I[illegible] Weekly
Founded [illegible] Benj. Franklin

Volume 200, Number 16

OCT. 15, 1927

5c. THE COPY

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MARACOT DEEP

By Arthur Conan Doyle

ILLUSTRATED BY ANTON OTTO FISCHER

II

FOR a time I think that we all had the same feeling. We did not want to do anything or to see anything. We just wanted to sit quiet and try to realize the wonder of it—that we should be resting in the plumb center of one of the great oceans of the world. But soon the strange scene round us, illuminated in all directions by our lights, drew us to the windows.

"We had settled upon a bed of high algæ—'Cutleria multifida,' said Maracot—the yellow fronds of which waved around us, moved by some deep-sea current exactly as branches would move in a summer breeze. They were not long enough to obscure our view, though their great flat leaves, deep golden in the light, flowed occasionally across our vision. Beyond them lay slopes of some blackish slaglike material which were dotted with lovely colored creatures—holothurians, ascidians, echini and echinoderms—as thickly as ever an English springtime bank was sprinkled with hyacinth and primroses. These living flowers of the sea, vivid scarlet, rich purple and delicate pink, were spread in profusion upon that coal-black background. Here and there great sponges bristled out from the crevices of the dark rocks, and a few fish of the middle depths, themselves showing up as flashes of color, shot across our circle of vivid radiance. We were gazing enraptured at the fairy scene when an anxious voice came down the tube:

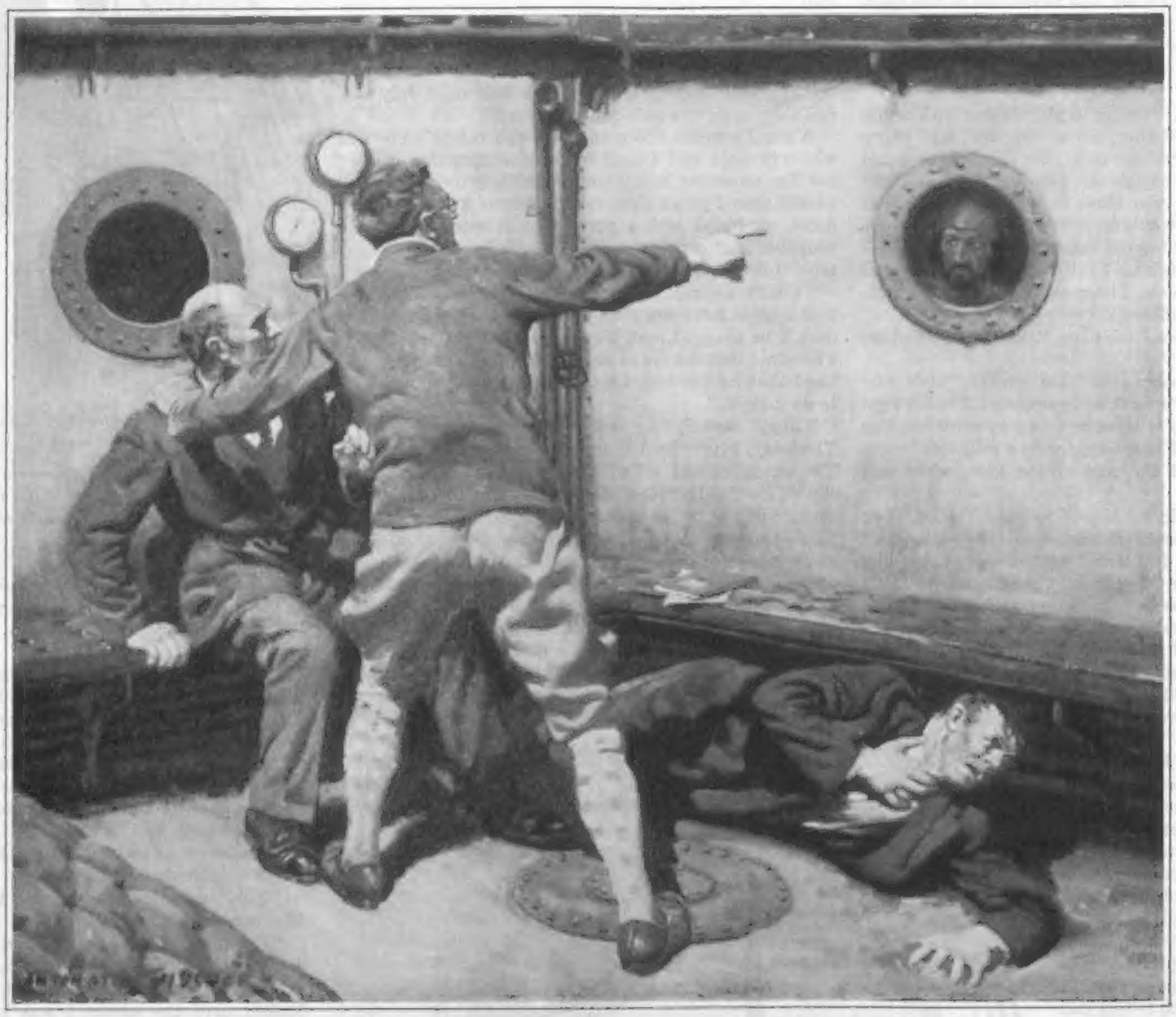
"'Well, how do you like the bottom? Is all well with you? Don't be too long, for the glass is dropping and I don't like the look of it. Giving you air enough? Anything more we can do?'

"'All right, captain!' cried Maracot cheerily. 'We won't be long. We are quite as comfortable as in our own cabin. Stand by presently to move us slowly forward.'

"We had come into the region of the luminous fishes and it amused us to turn out our own lights and in the absolute pitch darkness—a darkness in which a sensitive plate can be suspended for an hour without a trace even of the ultraviolet ray—to look out at the phosphorescent activity of the ocean. As against a black velvet curtain, one saw little points of brilliant light moving steadily along as a liner at night might shed light through its long line of portholes. One terrifying creature had luminous teeth which gnashed in Biblical fashion in the outer darkness. Another had long golden antennæ, and yet another a plume of flame above its head. As far as our vision carried, brilliant points flashed in the darkness, each little being bent upon its own business and lighting up its own course as surely as the nightly taxicabs at the theater hour in the Strand. Soon we had our own lights on again and the doctor was making his observations of the sea bottom.

"'Deep as we are, we are not deep enough to get any of the characteristic bathic deposits,' said he. 'These are entirely beyond our possible range. Perhaps on another occasion, with a longer hawser ——'

"'Cut it out!' growled Bill. 'Forget it!'



"A Human Face Was Looking in at Us Through the Porthole!"

"Maracot smiled. 'You will soon get acclimatized to the depths, Scanlan. This will not be our only descent.'

"'The hell you say!' muttered Bill.

"'You will think no more of it than of going down into the hold of the Stratford. You will observe, Mr. Headley, that the groundwork here, so far as we can observe it through the dense growth of Hydrozoa and siliceous sponges, is pumice stone and the black slag of basalt, pointing to ancient Plutonic activities. Indeed, I am inclined to think that it confirms my previous view that this ridge is part of a volcanic formation and that the Maracot Deep'—he rolled out the words as if he loved them—'represents the outer slope of the mountain. It has struck me that it would be an interesting experiment to move our cage slowly onward until we come to the edge of the Deep and see exactly what the formation may be at that point. I should expect to find a precipice of majestic dimensions extending downward at a sharp angle into the extreme depths of the ocean.'

"The experiment seemed to me to be a dangerous one, for who could say how far our thin hawser could bear the strain of lateral movement? But with Maracot, danger either to himself or to anyone else simply did not exist when a scientific observation had to be made. I held my breath—and so, I observed, did Bill Scanlan—when a slow movement of our steel shell, brushing aside the waving fronds of seaweed, showed that the full strain was upon the line. It stood it nobly, however, and with a very gentle sweeping progression we began to glide over the bottom of the ocean, Maracot, with a compass in the hollow of his hand, shouting his direction as to the course to follow and occasionally ordering the shell to be raised so as to avoid some obstacle in our path.

"'This basaltic ridge can hardly be more than a mile across,' he explained. 'I had marked the abyss as being to the west of the point where we took our plunge. At this rate we should certainly reach it in a very short time.'

"We slid without any check over the volcanic plain, all feathered by the waving golden algæ and made beautiful by the gorgeous jewels of Nature's cutting, flaming out from their setting of jet.

"Suddenly the doctor dashed to the telephone. 'Stop her!' he cried. 'We are there!'

"A monstrous gap had opened suddenly before us. It was a fearsome place, the vision of a nightmare. Black shining cliffs of basalt fell sheer down into the unknown. Their edges were fringed with dangling Laminaria as ferns might overhang some earthly gorge, but beneath that tossing, vibrating rim there were only the black gleaming walls of the chasm. The rocky edge curved away from us, but the abyss might be of any breadth, for our lights failed to penetrate the gloom which lay before us. When one of our signaling lamps was turned downward it shot out a long golden lane of parallel beams extending down, down, down, until it was quenched in the gloom of the terrible chasm beneath us.

"'It is indeed wonderful!' cried Maracot, gazing out with a pleased proprietary expression upon his thin, eager face. 'For depth I need not say that it has often been exceeded. There is the Challenger Deep of twenty-six thousand feet near the Ladrone Islands, the Planet Deep of thirty-two thousand feet off the Philippines, and many others; but it is probable that the Maracot Deep stands alone in the declivity of its descent, and is remarkable also for its escape from the observation of so many hydrographic explorers who have charted the Atlantic. It can hardly be doubted ——'

"He had stopped in the middle of a sentence and a look of intense interest and surprise had frozen upon his face. Bill Scanlan and I, gazing over his shoulders, were petrified by that which met our startled eyes.

"Some great creature was coming up the tunnel of light which we had projected into the abyss. Far down, where it tailed off into the darkness of the pit, we could dimly see the vague black lurchings and heavings of some monstrous body in slow upward progression. Paddling in clumsy fashion, it was rising with dim flickerings to the edge of the gulf.

"Now, as it came nearer, it was right in the beam and we could see its dreadful form more clearly. It was a beast unknown to science and yet with an analogy to much with which we are familiar. Too long for a huge crab and too short for a giant lobster, it was molded more upon the lines of the crawfish, with two monstrous nippers outstretched on either side and a pair of sixteen-foot antennæ which quivered in front of its black, dull, sullen eyes. The carapace, light yellow in color, may have been ten feet across, and its total length apart from the antennæ must have been not less than thirty.

"'Wonderful!' cried Maracot, scribbling desperately in his notebook. 'Semipediculated eyes, elastic lamellæ, family Crustacea, species unknown. Crustaceus Maracot—why not? Why not?'

"'By gosh, I'll pass its name, but it seems to me it's coming our way!' cried Bill. 'Say, doc, what about putting our light out?'

"'Just one moment while I note the reticulations!' cried the naturalist. 'Yes, yes, that will do.' He clicked off the switch and we were back in our inky darkness, with only the darting lights outside, like meteors on a moonless night.

"'That beast is sure the world's worst,' said Bill, wiping his forehead. 'I feel like the morning after a bottle of prohibition hooch.'

"'It is certainly terrible to look at,' Maracot remarked, 'and perhaps terrible to deal with also if we were exposed to those monstrous claws. But inside our steel case we can afford to examine him in safety and at our ease.'

"He had hardly spoken when there came a rap as from a pickax upon our outer wall. Then there was a long-drawn rasping and scratching, ending in another sharp rap.

"'Say, he wants to come in!' cried Bill Scanlan in alarm. 'By gosh, we want No Admission painted on this shack!' His shaking voice showed how forced was his merriment, and I confess that my own knees were knocking together as I was aware of the stealthy monster closing up with an even blacker darkness each of our windows in succession, as he explored this strange shell which could he but crack it might contain his food.

"'He can't hurt us,' said Maracot; but there was less assurance in his tone. 'Maybe it would be as well to shake the brute off.' He hailed the captain up the tube: 'Pull us up twenty or thirty feet!' he cried.

"A few seconds later we rose from the lava plain and swung gently in the still water. But the terrible beast was pertinacious. After a very short interval, we heard once more the raspings of his feelers and the sharp tappings of his claws as he felt us round. It was terrible to sit silent in the dark and know that death was so near. If that mighty claw fell upon the window,would it stand the strain? That was the unspoken question in each of our minds.

"But suddenly an unexpected and more urgent danger presented itself. The tappings had gone to the roof of our little dwelling, and now we began to sway with a rhythmic movement to and fro.

"'Good God!' I cried. 'It has hold of the hawser! It will surely snap it!'

"'Say, doc, it's mine for the surface. I guess we've seen what we came to see, and it's home, sweet home for Bill Scanlan. Ring up the elevator and get her going.'

"'But our work is not half done!' croaked Maracot. 'We have only begun to explore the edges of the Deep. Let us at least see how broad it is. When we have reached the other side I will be content to return.' Then up the tube: 'All well, captain. Move on at two knots until I call for a stop.'

"We moved slowly out over the edge of the abyss. Since darkness had not saved us from attack, we now turned on our lights. One of the portholes was entirely obscured by what appeared to be the creature's lower stomach. Its head and its great nippers were at work above us and we still swayed like a clanging bell. The strength of the beast must have been enormous. Were ever mortals placed in such a situation, with five miles of water beneath and that deadly monster above? The oscillations became more and more violent. An excited shout came down the tube from the captain as he became aware of the jerks upon the hawser, and Maracot sprang to his feet, with his hands thrown upward in despair. Even within the shell, we were aware of the jar of the broken wires, and an instant later we were falling into the mighty gulf beneath us.

"As I look back at that awful moment I can remember hearing a wild cry from Maracot. 'The hawser has parted! You can do nothing! We are all dead men!' he yelled, grabbing at the telephone tube; and then—'Good-by, captain, good-by to all.' They were our last words to the world of men.

"We did not fall swiftly down, as you might have imagined. In spite of our weight, our hollow shell gave us some sustaining buoyancy, and we sank slowly and gently into the abyss. I heard the long scrape as we slid through the claws of the horrible creature that had been our ruin, and then with a smooth gyration we went circling downward into the abysmal depths. It may have been fully five minutes, and it seemed like an hour, before we reached the limit of our telephone wire and snapped it like a thread. Our air tube broke off at almost the same moment and the salt water came spouting through the vents. With quick, deft hands, Bill Scanlan tied cords round each of the rubber tubes and so stopped the inrush, while the doctor released the top of our compressed air, which came hissing forth from the tubes. The lights had gone out when the wire snapped, but even in the dark the doctor was able to connect up the dry cells, which lit a number of lamps.

"'It should last us a week,' he said, with a wry smile. 'We shall at least have light to die in.' Then he shook his head sadly and a kindly smile came over his gaunt features. 'It is all right for me. I am an old man and have done my work in the world. My one regret is that I should have allowed you two young fellows to come with me. I should have taken the risk alone.'

"I simply shook his hand in reassurance, for, indeed, there was nothing I could say. Bill Scanlan, too, was silent. Slowly we sank, marking our pace by the dark fish shadows which flitted past our windows. It seemed as if they were flying upward rather than that we were sinking down. We still oscillated and there was nothing so far as I could see to prevent us from falling on our side or even turning upside down. Our weight, however, was, fortunately, very evenly balanced and we kept a level floor. Glancing up at the bathymeter, I saw that we had already reached the depth of a mile.

"'You see, it is as I said,' remarked Maracot with some complacency. 'You may have seen my paper in the proceedings of the Oceanographical Society upon the relation of pressure and depth. I wish I could get one word back to the world, if only to confute Bülow of Giessen, who ventured to contradict me.'

"'My gosh, if I could get a word back to the world, I wouldn't waste it on a square-head highbrow!' said the mechanic. 'There is a little wren in Philadelphia that will have tears in her pretty eyes when she hears that Bill Scanlan has passed out. Well, it sure does seem a dum queer way of doing it anyhow.'

"'You should never have come,' I said, putting my hand on his.

"'What sort of tin-horn sport should I have been if I had quit?' he answered. 'No, it's my job, and I'm glad I stuck to it.'

"'How long have we?' I asked the doctor, after a pause.

"He shrugged his shoulders.

"'We shall have time to see the real bottom of the ocean, anyhow,' said he. 'There is air enough in our tubes for the better part of a day. Our trouble is with the waste products. That is what is going to choke us. If we could get rid of our carbon dioxide ——'

"'That, I can see, is impossible.'

"'There is one tube of pure oxygen. I put it in in case of accidents. A little of that from time to time will help to keep us alive. . . . You will observe that we are now more than two miles deep.'

(Continued on Page 180)

"Were Ever Mortals Placed in Such a Situation, With Five Miles of Water Beneath and That Deadly Monster Above?"

MARACOT DEEP

Continued from Page 27)

"'Why should we try to keep ourselves alive? The sooner it is over, the better,' said I

"'That's the dope!' cried Scanlan. 'Cut loose and have done with it.'

"'And miss the most wonderful sight that man's eye has ever seen!' said Maracot 'It would be treason to science Let us record facts to the end, even if they should be forever buried with our bodies. Play the game out.'

"'Some sport, the doc!' cried Scanlan. 'I guess he has the best guts of the bunch. Let us see the spiel to an end.'

"We sat patiently on the settee, the three of us, gripping the edges of it with strained fingers as it swayed and rocked, while the fishes still flashed swiftly upward past the portholes

"'It is now three miles,' remarked Maracot. 'I will turn on the oxygen, Mr. Headley, for it is certainly very close. There is one thing,' he added, with his dry, cackling laugh. 'It will certainly be the Maracot Deep from this time onward. When Captain Howie takes back the news, my colleagues will see to it that my grave is also my monument. Even Bunow of Giessen ——' He babbled on about some unintelligible scientific grievance.

"We sat in silence again, watching the needle as it crawled on to its fourth mile. At one point we struck something heavy, which shook us so violently that I feared we would turn upon our side. It may have been a huge fish, or conceivably we may have bumped upon some projection of the cliff over the edge of which we had been precipitated. That edge had seemed to us at the time to be such a wondrous depth, and now, looking back at it from our dreadful abyss, it might almost have been the surface. Still we swirled and circled lower and lower through the dark-green waste of waters. Twenty-five thousand feet now was registered upon the dial

"'We are nearly at our journey's end,' said Maracot 'My Scott's recorder gave me twenty-six thousand seven hundred last year at the deepest point. We shall know our fate within a few minutes. It may be that the shock will crush us. It may be ——'

"And at that moment we landed.

"There was never a babe lowered by its mother onto a feather bed who nestled down more gently than we onto the extreme bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. The soft, thick, elastic ooze upon which we lit was a perfect buffer which saved us from the slightest jar. We hardly moved upon our seats, and it is as well that we did not, for we had perched upon some sort of projecting hummock, clothed thickly with the viscous, gelatinous mud, and there we were balanced, rocking gently, with nearly half our base projecting and unsupported. There was a danger that we would tip over on our side, but finally we steadied down and remained motionless. As we did so, Doctor Maracot, staring out through his porthole, gave a cry of surprise and hurriedly turned out our electric light.

"To our amazement we could still see clearly. There was a dim, misty light outside which streamed through our portholes like the cold radiance of a winter morning. We looked out at the strange scene, and with no help from our own lights we could see clearly for some hundred yards in each direction. It was impossible, inconceivable, but none the less the evidence of our senses told us that it was a fact. The great ocean floor is luminous.

"'Why not?' cried Maracot, when we had stood for a minute or two in silent wonder. 'Should I not have foreseen it? What is this pteropod or globigerina ooze? Is it not the product of decay, the moldering bodies of a billion billion organic creatures? And is decay not associated with phosphorescent luminosity? Where, in all creation, would it be seen if it were not here? Ah, it is indeed hard that we should have such a demonstration and be unable to send our knowledge back to the world.'

"'And yet,' I remarked, 'we have scooped half a ton of radiolarian jelly at a time and detected no such radiance.'

"'It would lose it, doubtless, in its long journey to the surface. And what is half a ton compared to these far-stretching plains of slow putrescence? And see—see,' he cried in uncontrollable excitement, 'the deep-sea creatures graze upon this organic carpet, even as our herds on land graze upon the meadows''

"As he spoke a flock of big black fish, heavy and squat, came slowly over the ocean bed toward us, nuzzling among the spongy growths and nibbling away as they advanced. Another huge red creature, like a foolish cow of the ocean, was chewing the cud in front of my porthole, and others were grazing here and there, raising their heads from time to time to gaze at this strange object which had so suddenly appeared among them.

"I could only marvel at Maracot, who in that foul atmosphere, seated under the very shadow of death, still obeyed the call of science and scribbled his observations in his notebook. Without following his precise methods, I none the less made my own mental notes, which will remain forever as a picture stamped upon my brain.

"The lowest plains of ocean consist of red clay, but here it was overlaid by the gray bathybian slime which formed an undulating plain as far as our eyes could reach This plain was not smooth, but was broken by numerous strange rounded hillocks like that upon which we had perched, all glimmering in the spectral light. Between these little hills there darted great clouds of strange fish, many of them quite unknown to science, exhibiting every shade of color, but black and red predominating. Maracot watched them with suppressed excitement and chronicled them in his notes. 'Surely that is Harriotta,' he would murmur. 'Dear me, that can only be Bathysaurus. Headley, can you see that splendid Alepocephalus among the weeds yonder? And there among the calcareous sponges, are we too rash if we claim it to be a new variety of sea snake? Oh, the wealth of it, the wealth of it, and all lost to the world!' He groaned in the agony of his frustration. The shell rocked with his passionate gesticulations.

"The air had become very foul, and again we were only able to save ourselves by a fresh emission of oxygen. Curiously enough, we were all hungry—I should rather say ravenous—and we fell upon the potted beef, with bread and butter, washed down by whisky and water, which the foresight of Maracot had provided. With my perceptions stimulated by this refreshment, I was seated at my lookout portal and longing for a last cigarette, when my eyes caught something which sent a whirl of strange thoughts and anticipations through my mind.

"I have said that the undulating gray plain on every side of us was studded with what seemed like hummocks. A particularly large one was in front of my porthole and I looked out at it within a range of thirty feet There was some peculiar mark upon the side of it, and as I glanced along I saw to my surprise that this mark was repeated again and again until it was lost round the curve. When one is so near death it takes much to give one a thrill about anything connected with this world, but my breath failed me for a moment and my heart stood still as I suddenly realized that it was a frieze at which I was looking and that, barnacled and worn as it was, the hand of man had surely at some time carved these faded figures. Maracot and Scanlan crowded to my porthole and gazed out in utter amazement at these signs of the omnipresent energies of man

"'It's carving, for sure!' cried Scanlan 'I guess this dump has been the roof of a building Then these other ones are buildings also. Say, boss, we've dropped plumb onto a regular burg.'

"'It is, indeed, an ancient city,' said Maracot. 'Geology teaches that the seas have once been continents and the continents seas, but I have always distrusted the idea that in times so recent as the Quaternary there could have been an Atlantic subsidence. Plato's report of Egyptian gossip had, then, a foundation of fact. These volcanic formations confirm the view that this subsidence was due to seismic activity.'

"'There is regularity about these domes,' I remarked. 'I begin to think that they are not separate houses, but that they are cupolas and form the ornaments of the roof of some huge building.'

"'I guess you are right,' said Scanlan. 'There are four big ones at the corners and the small ones in lines between. It's some building, if we could see the whole of it! You could put the whole Merribank plant inside it—and then some.'

"'It has been buried up to the roof by the constant dropping from above,' said Maracot. 'On the other hand, it has not decayed. We have a constant temperature of a little more than 32 Fahrenheit in the great depths, which would arrest destructive processes. Even the dissolution of the bathic remains which pave the floor of the ocean and incidentally give us this luminosity must be a very slow one. But, dear me, this marking is not a frieze but an inscription!'

"There was no doubt that he was right. The same symbol recurred every here and there. These marks were unquestionably letters of some archaic alphabet.

"'I have made a study of Phenician antiquities, and there is certainly something suggestive and familiar in these characters,' said our leader. 'Well, we have seen a buried city of ancient days, my friends, and we carry a wonderful piece of knowledge with us to the grave. There is no more to be learned. Our book of knowledge is closed. I agree with you that the sooner the end comes the better.'

"It could not now be long delayed. The air was stagnant and dreadful. So heavy was it with the carbon products that the oxygen could hardly force its way out against the pressure. By standing on the settee one was able to get a gulp of purer air, but the mephitic reek was slowly rising. Doctor Maracot folded his arms with an air of resignation and sank his head upon his breast Scanlan was now overpowered by the fumes and was already sprawling upon the floor. My own head was swimming and I felt an intolerable weight at my chest. I closed my eyes and my senses were rapidly slipping away. Then I opened them for one last glimpse of that world which I was leaving, and as I did so I staggered to my feet with a hoarse scream of amazement.

"A human face was looking in at us through the porthole!

"Was it my delirium? I clutched at the shoulder of Maracot and shook him violently. He sat up and stared, wonder-stricken and speechless at this apparition. If he saw it as well as I, it was no figment of the brain. The face was long and thin, dark in complexion, with a short pointed beard and two vivid eyes darting here and there in quick, questioning glances which took in every detail of our situation. The utmost amazement was visible upon the man's face. Our lights were now full on, and it must indeed have been a strange and vivid picture which presented itself to his gaze in that tiny chamber of death, where one man lay senseless and two others glared out at him with the twisted, contorted features of dying men, cyanosed by incipient asphyxiation. We both had our hands to our throats, and our chests carried their message of despair. The man gave a wave of his hand and hurried away

"'He has deserted us!' cried Maracot.

"'Or gone for help. . . . Let us get Scanlan on the couch. It's death for him down there.'

"We dragged the mechanic onto the settee and propped his head against the cushions. His face was gray and he murmured in delirium, but his pulse was still perceptible.

"'There is hope for us yet,' I croaked

"'But it is madness!' cried Maracot. 'How can man live at the bottom of the ocean? How can he breathe? It is collective hallucination. My young friend, we are going mad.'

"Looking out at the bleak, lonely, gray landscape in the dreary, spectral light, I felt that it might be as Maracot said. Then suddenly I was aware of movement Shadows were flitting through the distant water. They hardened and thickened into hurrying figures. A crowd of people were hurrying across the ocean bed in our direction. An instant later they had assembled in front of the porthole and were pointing and gesticulating in animated debate.

"There were several women in the crowd, but the greater part were men, one of whom, a powerful figure with a very large head and a full black beard, was clearly a person of authority. He made a swift inspection of our steel shell, and since the edge of our base projected over the place in which we rested, he was able to see that there was a hinged trapdoor at the bottom. He now sent a messenger flying back, while he made energetic and commanding signs to us to open the door from within.

"'Why not?' I asked 'We may as well be drowned as be smothered. I can stand it no longer.'

"'We may not be drowned,' said Maracot. 'The water entering from below cannot rise above the level of the compressed air. Give Scanlan some brandy. He must make an effort, if it is his last one'

"I forced a drink down the mechanic's throat. He gulped and looked round him with wondering eyes. Between us we got him erect on the settee and stood on either side of him. He was still half dazed, but in a few words I explained the situation.

"'There is a chance of chlorine poisoning if the water reaches the batteries,' said Maracot. 'Open every air tube, for the more pressure we can get, the less water may enter Now help me while I pull upon the lever.'

"We bent our weight upon it and yanked up the circular plate from the bottom of our little home, though I felt like a suicide as I did so. The green water, sparkling and gleaming under our light, came gurgling and surging in. It rose rapidly to our feet, to our knees, to our waists, and there it stopped. But the pressure of the air was intolerable. Our heads buzzed and the drums of our ears were bursting We could not have lived in such an atmosphere for long. Only by clutching at the rack could we save ourselves from falling back into the waters beneath us.

"From our higher position we could no longer see through the portholes, nor could we imagine what steps were being taken for our deliverance Indeed, that any effective help could come to us seemed beyond the power of thought, and yet there was a commanding and purposeful air about these people, and especially about that squat bearded chieftain, which inspired vague hopes Suddenly we were aware of his face looking up at us through the water beneath, and an instant later he had passed through the circular opening and had clambered onto the settee, so that he was standing by our side—a short, sturdy figure, not higher than my shoulder, but surveying us with large brown eyes which were full of a half-amused confidence, as who should say, 'You poor devils! You think you are in a bad way, but I can very clearly see the road out.'

"Only now was I aware of a very amazing thing The man—if, indeed, he was of

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the same humanity as ourselves—had a transparent envelope all round him which enveloped his head and body, while his arms and legs were free. So translucent was it that no one could detect it in the water, but now that he was in the air beside us it glistened like silver, though it remained as clear as the finest glass. On either shoulder he had a curious rounded projection beneath the clear protective sheath. It looked like an oblong box pierced with many holes and gave him an appearance as if he were wearing epaulets.

"When our new friend had joined us, another face appeared in the aperture of the bottom and thrust through it what seemed like a great bubble of glass. Three of these in succession were passed in and floated upon the surface of the water. Then six small boxes were handed up and our new acquaintance tied one with the straps attached to them to each of our shoulders, whence they stood up like his own.

"Already I began to surmise that no infraction of natural law was involved in the life of these strange people, and that while one box in some new fashion was a producer of air, the other was an absorber of waste products. He now passed the transparent suits over our heads, and we felt that they clasped us tightly in the upper arm and waist by elastic bands, so that no water could penetrate. Within we breathed with perfect ease, and it was a joy to me to see Maracot looking out at me with his eyes twinkling as of old behind his glasses, while Bill Scanlan's grin assured me that the life-giving oxygen had done its work and that he was his cheerful self once more. Our rescuer looked from one to another of us with grave satisfaction, and then motioned to us to follow him through the trap-door and out on to the floor of the ocean. A dozen willing hands were outstretched to pull us through and to sustain our first faltering steps as we staggered with our feet deep in the slimy ooze.

"Even now I cannot get past the marvel of it. There we were, the three of us, unhurt and at our ease at the bottom of a five-mile abyss of water. Where was that terrific pressure which had exercised the imagination of so many scientists? We were no more affected by it than were the dainty fish which swam around us. It is true that, so far as our bodies were concerned, we were protected by these delicate bells of vitrine which were in truth tougher than the strongest steel; but even our limbs, which were exposed, felt no more than a firm constriction from the water which one learned in time to disregard.

"It was wonderful to stand together and to look back at the shell from which we had emerged. We had left the batteries at work, and it was a wondrous object, with its streams of yellow light flooding out from each side while clouds of fishes gathered at each window. As we watched it the leader took Maracot by the hand and we followed them both across the watery morass, clumping heavily through the sticky surface.

"And now a most surprising incident occurred, which was clearly as astonishing to these strange new companions of ours as to ourselves. Above our heads there appeared a small dark object, descending from the darkness above us and swinging down until it reached the bed of the ocean within a very short distance from where we stood. It was, of course, the deep-sea lead from the Stratford above us, making a sounding of that watery gulf with which the name of the expedition was to be associated.

"We had seen it already upon its downward path and we could well understand that the tragedy of our disappearance had suspended the operation, but that after a pause it had been concluded with little thought that it would finish almost at our feet. They were unconscious, apparently, that they had touched bottom, for the lead lay motionless in the ooze.

"Above me stretched the taut piano wire which connected me through five miles of water with the deck of our vessel. Oh, that it were possible to write a note and to attach it! The idea was absurd, and yet could I not send some message which would show them that we were still conscious? My coat was covered by my glass bell and the pockets were unapproachable, but I was free below the waist and my handkerchief chanced to be in my trousers pocket. I pulled it out and tied it round the top of the lead. The weight itself at once disengaged itself by its automatic mechanism, and presently I saw my white wisp of linen flying upward to that world which I may never see again. Our new acquaintances examined the seventy-five pounds of lead with great interest and finally carried it off with us as we went upon our way.

"We had only walked a couple of hundred yards, threading our way among the hummocks, when we halted before a small square-cut door, with solid pillars on either side and an inscription across the lintel. It was open and we passed through it into a large bare chamber. There was a sliding partition worked by a crank from within, and this was drawn across behind us.

"We could, of course, hear nothing in our glass helmets; but after standing a few minutes, we were aware that a powerful pump must be at work, for we saw the level of the water sinking rapidly above us. In less than a quarter of an hour we were standing upon a sloppy stone-flagged pavement, while our new friends were busy in undoing the fastenings of our transparent suits. An instant later there we stood, breathing perfectly pure air in a warm, well-lighted atmosphere, while the dark people of the abyss, smiling and chattering, crowded round us with handshakings and friendly pattings. It was a strange, rasping tongue that they spoke, and no word of it was intelligible to us, but the smile on the face and the light of friendship in the eye are understandable even in the waters under the earth. The glass suits were hung on numbered pegs upon the wall, and the kindly folk half led and half pushed us to an inner door which opened onto a long downward-sloping corridor. When it closed again behind us there was nothing to remind us of the stupendous fact that we were the involuntary guests of an unknown race at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean and cut off forever from the world to which we belonged.

"Now that the terrific strain had been so suddenly eased, we were all exhausted. Even Bill Scanlan, who was a pocket Hercules, dragged his feet along the floor, while Maracot and I were only too glad to lean heavily upon our guides. Yet, weary as I was, I took in every detail as we passed. That the air came from some air-making machine was very evident, for it issued in puffs from circular openings in the walls. The light was diffused and was clearly an extension of that fluor system which was already engaging the attention of our European engineers, when the filament and lamp were dispensed with. It shone from long cylinders of clear glass which were suspended along the cornice of the passages.

"So much I had observed when our descent was checked and we were ushered into a large sitting room, thickly carpeted and well furnished with gilded chairs and sloping sofas which brought back vague memories of Egyptian tombs. The crowd had been dismissed and only the bearded man with two attendants remained. 'Manda,' he repeated several times, tapping himself upon the chest. Then he pointed to each of us in turn and repeated the words Maracot, Headley and Scanlan until he had them perfect. He then motioned us to be seated and said a word to the attendant, who left the room and returned presently escorting a very ancient gentleman, white-haired and long-bearded, with a curious conical cap of black cloth upon his head. I should have said that all these folk were dressed in colored tunics which extended to their knees, with high boots of fish skin or shagreen.

"The venerable newcomer was clearly a physician, for he examined each of us in turn, placing his hand upon our brows and closing his own eyes as if receiving a mental impression as to our condition. Apparently he was by no means satisfied, for he shook his head and said a few grave words to Manda. The latter at once sent the attendant out once more, and he brought in a tray of eatables and a flask of wine, which were laid before us. We were too weary to ask ourselves what they were, but we felt the better for the meal. We were then led to another room, where three beds had been prepared, and on one of these I flung myself down. I have a dim recollection of Bill Scanlan coming across and sitting beside me.

"'Say, bo, that jolt of brandy saved my life,' said he. 'But where are we, anyhow?'

"'I know no more than you do.'

"'Well, I am ready to hit the hay,' he said sleepily, as he turned to his bed. 'Say, that wine was fine.' They were the last words I heard as I sank into the most profound sleep that I can ever recall."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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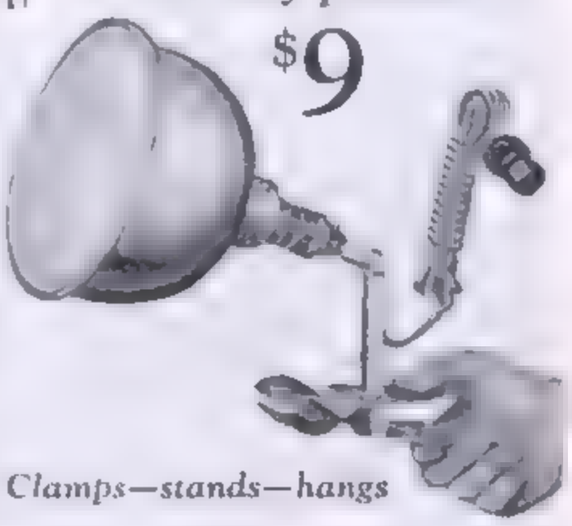

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MARACOT DEEP

By Arthur Conan Doyle

ILLUSTRATED BY ANTON OTTO FISCHER

"But He Was Running—Running With an Agility Which I Should Have Thought Impossible for a Man of His Habits"

III

WHEN I came to myself I could not at first imagine where I was. The events of the previous day were like some blurred nightmare, and I could not believe that I had to accept them as facts. I looked round in bewilderment at the large, bare, windowless room with drab-colored walls, at the lines of quivering purplish light which flowed along the cornices, at the scattered articles of furniture, and finally at the two other beds, from one of which came the high-pitched strident snore which I had learned aboard the Stratford to associate with Maracot. It was too grotesque to be true, and it was only when I fingered my bedcover and observed the curious woven material—the dried fibers of some sea plant—from which it was made that I was able to realize this inconceivable adventure which had befallen us. I was still pondering it when there came a loud explosion of laughter, and Bill Scanlan sat up in bed.

"'Mornin', bo!' he cried amid his chuckles.

"'You seem in good spirits,' said I rather testily. 'I can't see that we have much to laugh about.'

"'Well, I had a grouch on me the same as you when first I woke up,' he answered. 'Then came a real cute idea, and it was that that made me laugh.'

"'I could do with a laugh myself,' said I. 'What's the idea?'

"'Well, bo, I thought how durned funny it would have been if we had all tied ourselves onto that deep-sea line. I allow with those glass dinguses we could have kept breathing all right. Then when old man Howie looked over the side there would have been the whole bunch of us comin' up at him through the water. He would have figured that he had hooked us, sure. Gee, what a spiel!'

"Our united laughter woke the doctor, who sat up in bed with the same amazed expression upon his face which had previously been upon my own. I forgot our troubles as I listened in amusement to his disjointed comments, which alternated between ecstatic joy at the prospect of such a field of study and profound sorrow that he could never hope to convey his results to his scientific confreres of the earth. Finally he got back to the actual needs of the moment.

"'It is nine o'clock,' he said, looking at his watch. We all registered the same hour, but there was nothing to show if it was night or morning. 'We must keep our own calendar,' said Maracot; 'we descended upon October third. We reached this place on the evening of the same day. How long have we slept?'

"'My gosh, it may have been a month!' said Scanlan. 'I've not been so deep since Mickey Scott got me on the point in the six-round tryout at the works.'

"We dressed and washed, for every civilized convenience was at hand. The door, however, was fastened, and it was clear that we were prisoners for the time. In spite of the apparent absence of any ventilation, the atmosphere kept perfectly sweet, and we found that this was due to a current of air which came through small holes in the wall. There was some source of central heating, too, for though no stove was visible, the temperature was pleasantly warm. Presently I observed a knob upon one of the walls and pressed it. This was, as I expected, a bell, for the door instantly opened and a small dark man, dressed in a yellow robe, appeared in the aperture. He looked at us inquiringly, with large, brown, kindly eyes.

"'We are hungry,' said Maracot. 'Can you get us some food?'

"The man shook his head and smiled. It was clear that the words were incomprehensible to him. Scanlan tried his luck with a flow of American slang, which was received with the same blank smile. When, however, I opened my mouth and thrust my finger into it, our visitor nodded vigorously and hurried away.

"Ten minutes later the door opened and two of the yellow-clad attendants appeared, rolling a small table before them. Had we been at a first-class hotel we could not have had better fare. There was coffee, hot milk, rolls, delicious flatfish and honey. For half an hour we were far too busy to discuss what it was we ate or whence it was obtained. At the end of that time the two servants appeared once more, rolled out the table and closed the door carefully behind them.

"'I'm fair black and blue with pinching myself,' said Scanlan. 'Is this a pipe dream or what? Say, doc, you got us down here, and I guess it is up to you to tell us just how you size it all up.'

"The doctor shook his head. 'It is like a dream to me, also, but it is a glorious dream. What a story for the world if we could but get it to them!'

"'One thing is clear,' said I. 'There was certainly truth in this legend of Atlantis, and some of the folk have in a marvelous way managed to carry on.'

"'Well, even if they carried on,' cried Bill Scanlan, scratching his bullet head, 'I'm darned if I can understand how they could get air and fresh water and the rest. Maybe if that queer duck with the beard that we saw last night comes to give us a once-over, he will put us wise to it.'

"'How can he do that when we have no common language?'

"'Well, we shall use our own observation,' said Maracot. 'One thing I can already understand. I learned it from the honey at breakfast. That was clearly synthetic honey, such as we have already learned to make upon the earth. But if synthetic honey, why not synthetic coffee or flour? The molecules of the elements are like bricks, and these bricks lie all around us. We have only to learn how to pull out certain bricks—sometimes just a single brick—in order to make a fresh substance. Sugar becomes starch or either becomes alcohol just by a shifting of the bricks. What is it that shifts them? Heat—electricity—other things perhaps of which we know nothing. Some of them will shift themselves and radium becomes lead or uranium becomes radium without our touching them.'

"'You think then that they have an advanced chemistry?'

"'I'm sure of it. After all, there is no elemental brick which is not ready to their hands. Hydrogen and oxygen come readily from the sea water. There are nitrogen and carbon in those masses of sea vegetation, and there are phosphorus and calcium in the bathybic deposit. With skillful management and adequate knowledge, what is there which could not be produced?'

"The doctor had launched upon a chemical lecture, when the door opened and Manda entered, giving us a friendly greeting. There came with him the same old

gentleman of venerable appearance whom we had met the night before. He may have had a reputation for learning, for he tried several sentences, which were probably different languages, upon us, but all were equally unintelligible. Then he shrugged his shoulders and spoke to Manda, who gave an order to the two yellow-clad servants, still waiting at the door. They vanished, but returned presently with a curious screen, supported by two side posts. It was exactly like one of our cinema screens, but it was coated with some sparkling material which glittered in the light. This was placed against one of the walls. The old man then paced out very carefully a certain distance and marked it upon the floor. Standing at this point, he turned to Maracot and touched his forehead, pointing to the screen.

"'Clean dippy,' said Scanlan. 'Bats in the belfry.'

"Maracot shook his head to show that we were nonplused. So was the old man for a moment. An idea struck him, however, and he pointed to his own figure. Then he turned toward the screen, fixed his eyes upon it and seemed to concentrate his attention. In an instant a reflection of himself appeared on the screen before us. Then he pointed to us, and a moment later our own little group took the place of his image. It was not particularly like us. Scanlan looked like a comic Chinaman and Maracot like a decayed corpse, but it was clearly meant to be ourselves as we appeared in the eyes of the operator.

"'It's a reflection of thought!' I cried.

"'Exactly,' said Maracot. 'This is certainly a most marvelous invention, and yet it is but a combination of such telepathy and television as we dimly comprehend upon earth.'

"'I never thought I'd live to see myself in the movies, if that cheese-faced Chink is really meant for me,' said Scanlan. 'Say, if we could get all this news to the editor of the Ledger he'd cough up enough to keep me for life. We've sure got the goods if we could deliver them.'

"'That's the trouble,' said I. 'By George, we could stir the whole world if we could only get back to it! But what is he beckoning about?'

"'The old guy wants you to try your hand at it, doc.'

"Maracot took the place indicated, and his strong, clear-cut brain focused his picture to perfection. We saw an image of Manda, and then another one of the Stratford as we had left her.

"Both Manda and the old scientist nodded their great approval at the sight of the ship, and Manda made a sweeping gesture with his hands, pointing first to us and then to the screen.

"'To tell them all about it—that's the idea,' I cried. 'They want to know in pictures who we are and how we got here.'

"Maracot nodded to Manda to show that he understood, and had begun to throw an image of our voyage, when Manda held up his hand and stopped him. At an order the attendants removed the screen and the two Atlanteans beckoned that we should follow them.

"It was a huge building, and we proceeded down corridor after corridor until we came at last to a large hall with seats arranged in tiers like a lecture room. At one side was a broad screen of the same nature as that which we had seen. Facing it, there was assembled an audience of at least a thousand people, who set up a murmur of welcome as we entered. They were of both sexes and of all ages, the men dark and bearded, the women beautiful in youth and dignified in age. We had little time to observe them, for we were led to seats in the front row, and Maracot was then placed on a stand opposite the screen, the lights were in some fashion turned down and he had the signal to begin.

"And excellently well he played his part. We first saw our vessel sailing forth from the Thames, and a buzz of excitement went up from the tense audience at this authentic glimpse of a real modern city. Then a map appeared which marked her course. Then was seen the steel shell with its fittings, which was greeted with a murmur of recognition. We saw ourselves once more descending and reaching the edge of the abyss. Then came the appearance of the monster who had wrecked us. 'Marax! Marax!' cried the people, as the beast appeared. It was clear that they had learned to know and to fear it. There was a terrified hush as the creature fumbled with our hawser, and a groan of horror as the wires parted and we dropped into the gulf. In a month of explanation we could not have made our plight so clear as in that half hour of visible demonstration.

"As the audience broke up they showered every sign of sympathy upon us, crowding round us and patting our backs to show that we were welcome. We were presented in turn to some of the chiefs, but the chieftainship seemed to lie in wisdom alone, for all appeared to be on the same social scale and were dressed in much the same way. The men wore tunics of a saffron color, coming down to the knees, with belts and high boots of a scaly tough material which must have been the hide of some sea beast. The women were beautifully draped in classical style, their flowing robes, of every tint of pink and blue and green, ornamented with clusters of pearl or opalescent sheets of shell. Many of them were lovely beyond any earthly comparison.

"There was one—— But why should I mix my private feelings up with this public narrative? Let me say only that Mona is the only daughter of Scarpa, one of the leaders of the people, and that from that first day of meeting I read in her dark eyes a message of sympathy and of understanding which went home to my heart, as my gratitude and admiration may have gone to hers. I need not say more at present about this exquisite lady. Suffice it that a new and strong influence had come into my life.

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"A Moving Patch Appeared in Front of Us, Which Broke Up as We Approached It Into a Crowd of Men, Each in His Vitrine Envelope, Who Were Dragging Behind Them Broad Sledges Heaped With Coal"

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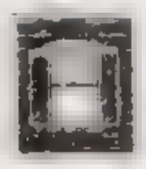

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MARACOT DEEP

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"When I saw Maracot gesticulating with unwonted animation to one kindly lady, while Scanlan stood conveying his admiration in patomime in the center of a group of laughing girls, I realized that my companions also had begun to find that there was a lighter side to our tragic position. If we were dead to the world, we had at least found a life beyond which promised some compensation for what we had lost.

"Later in the day we were guided by Manda and other friends round some portions of the immense building. It had been so embedded in the sea floor by the accumulations of ages that it was only through the roof that it could be entered, and from this point the passages led down and down until the floor level was reached several hundred feet below the entrance chamber. The floor in turn had been excavated and we saw in all directions passages which sloped downward into the bowels of the earth. We were shown the air-making apparatus, with the pumps which circulated it through the building.

"Maracot pointed out with wonder and admiration that not only was the oxygen united with the nitrogen but that smaller retorts supplied other gases which could only be the argon, neon and other little-known constituents of the atmosphere which we are only just beginning to understand. The distilling vats for making fresh water and the enormous electrical installments were other objects of interest, but much of the machinery was so intricate that it was difficult for us to follow the details. I can only say that I saw with my own eyes and tested with my own palate that chemicals in gaseous and liquid forms were poured into various machines, that they were treated by heat, by pressure and by electricity, and that flour, tea, coffee or wine was collected as the product.

"There was one consideration which was very quickly forced upon us by our examination on various occasions of as much of this building as was open to our inspection. This was that the exposure to the sea had been foreseen and the protection against the inrush of the water had been prepared long before the land sank beneath the waves. Of course, it stood to reason and needed no proof that such precautions could not have been taken after the event, but we were witnesses now of the signs that the whole great building had from the first been constructed with the one idea of being an enduring ark of refuge.

"The huge retorts and vats in which the air, the food, the distilled water and the other necessary products were made were all built into the walls and were evidently integral parts of the original construction. So, too, with the exit chambers, the silica works, where the vitrine beds were constructed, and the huge pumps which controlled the water. Every one of these things had been prepared by the skill and the foresight of that wonderful far-away people who seemed, from what we could learn, to have thrown out one arm to Central America and one to Egypt, and so left traces of themselves even upon this earth when their own land went down into the Atlantic.

"As to these their descendants, we judged that they had probably degenerated, as was but natural, and that at the most they had been stagnant and only preserved some of the science and knowledge of their ancestors without having the energy to add to it. They possessed wonderful powers and yet seemed to us to be strangely wanting in initiative, and had added nothing to that wonderful legacy which they had inherited. I am sure that Maracot, using this knowledge, would very soon have attained greater results.

"As to Scanlan, with his quick brain and mechanical skill, he was continually putting in touches which probably seemed as remarkable to them as their powers to us. He had a beloved mouth organ in his coat pocket when we made our descent, and his use of this was a perpetual joy to our companions, who sat around in entranced groups, as we might listen to a Mozart, while he handed out to them the crooning coon songs of his native land.

"I have said that the whole building was not open to our inspection, and I might give a little further detail upon that subject. There was one well-worn corridor down which we saw folk continually passing, but which was always avoided by our guides in our excursions. As was natural, our curiosity was aroused, and we determined one evening that we would take a chance and do a little exploring upon our own account. We slipped out of our room therefore and made our way to the unknown quarter at a time when few people were about.

"The passage led us to a high arched door which appeared to be made of solid gold. When we pushed it open we found ourselves in a huge room, forming a square of not less than two hundred feet. All round, the walls were painted with vivid colors and adorned with extraordinary pictures and statues of grotesque creatures with enormous headdresses, like the full-dress regalia of our American Indians. At the end of this great hall there was one huge seated figure, the legs crossed like a Buddha, but with none of the benignity of aspect which is seen on the Buddha's placid features. On the contrary this was a creature of wrath, open-mouthed and fierce-eyed, the latter being red and their effect exaggerated by two electric lights which shone through them. On his lap was a great dark oven, which we observed, as we approached it, to be filled with ashes.

"'Moloch!' said Maracot. 'Moloch, or Baal—the old god of the Phenician races.'

"'Good heavens!' I cried, with recollections of old Carthage before me. 'Don't tell me that these gentle folk could go in for human sacrifice!'

"'Looka here, bo!' said Scanlan anxiously. 'I hope they keep it in the family anyhow. We don't want them to pull no such dope on us.'

"'No, I guess they have learned their lesson,' said I. 'It's misfortune that teaches folk to have pity for others.'

"'That's right,' Maracot remarked, poking about among the ashes. 'It is the old hereditary god, but it is surely a gentler cult. These are burned loaves and the like. But perhaps there was a time——'

"But our speculations were interrupted by a stern voice at our elbow and we found several men in yellow garments and high hats who were clearly the priests of the temple. From the expression on their faces I should judge that we were very near to being the last victims to Baal, and one of them had actually drawn a knife from his girdle. With fierce gestures and cries they drove us roughly out of their sacred shrine.

"'By gosh,' cried Scanlan, 'I'll sock that duck if he keeps crowding me! Looka here, you bandlestiff, keep your hands off my coat!'

"For a moment I feared that we should have had what Scanlan called a rough-house within the sacred precincts. However, we got the angry mechanic away without blows and regained the shelter of our room, but we could tell from the demeanor of Manda and others of our friends that our escapade was known and resented. It was the one and only glimpse that we have had of the religion of these strange people.

"But there was another shrine which was freely shown to us and which had a very unexpected result, for it opened up a slow and imperfect method of communication between our companions and ourselves. This was a room in the lower quarter of the temple with no decorations or distinction save that at one end there stood a statue of ivory yellow with age, representing a woman holding a spear, with an owl perched upon her shoulder. A very old man was the guardian of the room, and in spite of his age it was clear to us that he was of a very different race, and one of a finer, larger type than the men of the temple. As we stood gazing at the ivory statue, Maracot and I, both wondering where we had seen something like it before, the old man addressed us.

"'Thea,' said he, pointing to the figure.

"'By George!' I cried. 'He is speaking Greek.'

"'Thea—Athena!' repeated the old man.

"There was not a doubt of it. 'Goddess Athena,' the words were unmistakable. Maracot, whose wonderful brain had absorbed something from every branch of human knowledge, began at once to ask questions in classical Greek which were only partly understood and were answered in a dialect so archaic that it was almost incomprehensible. Still, he acquired some knowledge, and he found an intermediary through whom he could dimly convey something to our companions.

"'It is a remarkable proof,' said Maracot that evening in his high neighing voice and in the tones of one addressing a large class, 'of the reliability of legend. There is always a basis of fact, even if in the course of the years it should become distorted. You are aware—or probably you are not aware'—'Bet your life!' from Scanlan—'that a war was going on between the primitive Greeks and the Atlanteans at the time of the destruction of the great island. The fact is recorded in Solon's description of what he learned from the priests of Sais. We may conjecture that there were Greek prisoners in the hands of the Atlanteans at the time, that some of them were in the service of the temple and that they carried their own religion with them. That man was, so far as I could understand, the old hereditary priest of the cult, and perhaps when we know more we shall see something of these ancient people.'

"'Well, I hand it to them for good sense,' said Scanlan. 'I guess if you want a plaster god, it is better to have a fine woman than that bratherskite with the red eyes and the coal bunker on his knees.'

"'Lucky they can't understand your views,' I remarked. 'If they did, you might end up as a Christian martyr.'

"'Not so long as I can play them jazz,' he answered. 'I guess they've got used to me now, and they couldn't do without me.'

"I expect he was right, too, for, with his cheery rough-and-ready ways, our mechanic was, before many weeks were over, very much the most popular of our party. Apart from his musical powers, Scanlan was an excellent dancer in the most recent American styles, and as I was also some performer when I was at Harvard, the two of us helped to enlarge the ideas of our submarine friends. They were a cheerful crowd and it was a happy life, but there were and are times when one's whole heart goes out to the homelands which we have lost, and visions of the dear old quadrangles of Oxford or of the ancient elms and the familiar campus of Harvard came up before my mind. In those early days they seemed as far from me as some landscape in the moon, and only now in a dim uncertain fashion does the hope of seeing them once more begin to grow in my soul.

"It was a few days after our arrival that our hosts or our captors—we were dubious sometimes as to which to call them—took us out for an expedition upon the bottom of the ocean. Six of them came with us, including Manda the chief. We assembled in the same exit chamber in which we had originally been received, and we were now in a condition to examine it a little more closely. It was a very large place, at least a hundred feet each way, and its low walls and ceiling were green with marine growths and dripping with moisture.

"A long row of pegs, with marks which I presume were numbers, ran round the

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whole room, and on each was hung one of the semitransparent bells of vitrine and a pair of the shoulder batteries which insured respiration. The floor was of flagged stone worn into concavities, the footsteps of many generations, these hollows now lying as pools of shallow water. The whole was highly illuminated by fluor tubes round the cornice. We were fastened into our vitrine coverings and a stout pointed staff made of some light metal was handed to each of us

"Then, by signals, Manda ordered us to take a grip of a rail which ran round the room, he and his friends setting us an example The object of this precaution soon became evident, for as the outer door swung slowly open the sea water came pouring in with such force that we should have been swept from our feet but for this precaution. It rose rapidly, however, to above the level of our heads and the pressure upon us was eased Manda led the way to the door, and an instant afterward we were out on the ocean bed once more, leaving the portal open behind us ready for our return

"Looking round us in the cold, flickering, spectral light which illuminates the bathybian plain, we could see for a radius of at least a quarter of a mile in every direction. What amazed us was to observe, on the very limit of what was visible, a very brilliant glow of radiance. It was toward this that our leader turned his steps, our party walking in single file behind him It was slow going, for there was the resistance of the water, and our feet were buried deeply in the soft slush with every step; but soon we were able to see clearly what the beacon was which had attracted us It was our own shell, our last reminder of terrestrial life, which lay tilted upon one of the cupolas of the far-flung building, with all its lights still blazing.

"It was three-quarters full of water, but the imprisoned air still preserved that portion in which our electric installment lay. It was strange, indeed, as we gazed into it, to see the familiar interior with our settees and instruments still in position, while several good-sized fish like minnows in a bottle swam round and round inside it One after the other our party clambered in through the open flap, Maracot to rescue a book of notes which floated on the surface, Scanlan and I to pick up some personal belongings

"Manda came also, with one or two of his comrades, examining with the greatest interest the bathometer and thermometer, with the other instruments which were attached to the wall. The latter we detached and took away with us. It may interest scientists to know that 40 degrees Fahrenheit represents the temperature at the greatest sea depth to which man has ever descended, and that it is higher, on account of the chemical decomposition of the ooze, than the upper strata of the sea.

"Our little expedition had, it seems, a definite object besides that of allowing us a little exercise upon the bed of the ocean. We were hunting for food Every now and then I saw our comrades strike sharply down with their pointed staves, impaling each time a large brown flat fish, not unlike a turbot, which was numerous, but lay so closely in the ooze that it took practiced eyes to detect it Soon each of the little men had two or three of these dangling at his side. Scanlan and I soon got the knack of it, and captured a couple each, but Maracot waded as one in a dream quite lost in his wonder at the ocean beauties around him and making long and excited speeches which were lost to the ear, but visible to the eyes from the contortion of his features.

"Our first impression had been one of monotony, but we soon found that the gray plains were broken up into varied formations by the action of the deep-sea currents which flowed like submarine rivers, across them These streams cut channels in the soft slime and exposed the beds which lay beneath. The floor of these banks consisted of the red clay which forms the base of all things on the surface of the bed of the ocean, and they were thickly studded with white objects which I imagined to be shells, but which proved, when we examined them, to be the ear bones of whales and the teeth of sharks and other sea monsters.

"One of these teeth which I picked up was fifteen inches long, and we could but be thankful that so fearful a monster frequented the higher levels of ocean. It belonged, according to Maracot, to a giant killing Grampus, or Orca gladiator.

"There was one peculiarity of the ocean depths which impresses itself upon the observer. There is, as I have said, a constant cold light rising up from the slow phosphorescent decay of the great masses of organic matter. But above, all is black as night. The effect is that of a dim winter day, with a heavy black thundercloud lying low above the earth Out of this black canopy there falls slowly an incessant snowstorm of tiny white flakes which glimmer against the somber background. These are the shells of sea snails and other small creatures that live and die in the five miles of water which separate us from the surface; and though many of these are dissolved as they fall and add to the lime salts in the ocean, the rest go in the course of ages to form that deposit which had entombed the great city in the upper part of which we now dwelt

"Leaving our last link with earth beneath us, we pushed on into the gloom of the submarine world and soon we were met by a completely new development. A moving patch appeared in front of us, which broke up as we approached it into a crowd of men, each in his vitrine envelope, who were dragging behind them broad sledges heaped with coal. It was heavy work, and the poor devils were bending and straining, tugging hard at the shark-skin ropes which served as traces.

"With each gang of men there was one who appeared to be in authority, and it interested us to see that the leaders and the workers were clearly of a different race. The latter were tall men, fair, with blue eyes and powerful bodies. The others were as already described, dark and almost negroid, with squat, broad frames. We could not inquire into the mystery at that moment, but the impression was left upon my mind that the one race represented the hereditary slaves of the other, and Maracot was of opinion that they may have been the descendants of those Greek prisoners whose goddess we had seen in the temple.

"Several droves of these men, each drawing their loads of coal, were met by us before we came to the mine itself. At this point the deep-sea deposits and the sandy formations which lay beneath them had been cut away and a great pit exposed, which consisted of alternate layers of clay and coal representing strata in the old perished world of long ago which now lay at the bottom of the Atlantic.

"At the various levels of this huge excavation we could see gangs of men at work hewing the coal, while others gathered it into loads and placed it in baskets, by means of which it was hoisted up to the level above. The whole mine was on so vast a scale that we could not see the other side of the enormous pit which so many generations of workers had scooped in the bed of the ocean This, then, transmuted into electric force, was the source of the motive power by which the whole machinery of Atlanta was run It is interesting, by the way to record that the name of the old city had been correctly preserved in the legends, for when we mentioned it to Manda and others they first looked greatly surprised that we should know it and then nodded their heads vigorously to show that they understood

"Passing the great coal pit — or rather, branching away from it to the right — we came on a line of low cliffs of basalt, their surface as clear and shining as on the day when they were shot up from the bowels of

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the earth, while their summit, some hundred feet above us, loomed up against the dark background. The base of these volcanic cliffs was draped in a deep jungle of high seaweed growing out of tangled masses of crinoid corals laid down in the old terrestrial days.

"Along the edge of this thick undergrowth we wandered for some time, our companions beating it with their sticks and driving out for our amusement an extraordinary assortment of strange fishes and Crustacea, now and again securing a specimen for their own tables For a mile or more we wandered along in this happy fashion, when I saw Manda stop suddenly and look round him with gestures of alarm and surprise. These submarine gestures formed a language in themselves, for in a moment his companions understood the cause of his trouble, and then with a shock we realized it also. Doctor Maracot had disappeared.

"He had certainly been with us at the coal pit, and he had come as far as the basalt cliffs It was inconceivable that he had got ahead of us, so it was evident that he must be somewhere along the line of jungle in our rear. Though our friends were disturbed, Scanlan and I, who knew something of the good man's absent-minded eccentricities, were confident that there was no cause for alarm and that we should soon find him loitering over some sea form which had attracted him. We all turned to retrace our steps and had hardly gone a hundred yards before we caught sight of him.

"But he was running running with an agility which I should have thought impossible for a man of his habits. Even the least athletic can run, however, when fear is the pacemaker. His hands were outstretched for help and he stumbled and blundered forward with clumsy energy. He had good cause to exert himself, for three horrible creatures were close at his heels. They were tiger crabs, striped black and white, each about the size of a Newfoundland dog. Fortunately, they were themselves not very swift travelers and were scurrying along the soft sea bottom in a curious sidelong fashion which was little faster than that of the terrified fugitive. Their wind was better, however, and they would probably have had their horrible claws upon him in a very few minutes had not our friends intervened.

"They dashed forward with their pointed sticks and Manda flashed a powerful electric lantern which he carried in his belt in the faces of the loathsome monsters, which scuttled into the jungle and were lost to view. Our comrade sat down on a lump of coal and his face showed that he was exhausted by his adventure. He told us afterward that he had penetrated the jungle in the hope of securing what seemed to him to be a rare specimen of the deep-sea Chimæra, and that he had blundered into the nest of these fierce tiger crabs, which had instantly dashed after him. It was only after a long rest that he was able to resume the journey.

"Our next stage after skirting the basalt cliffs led us to our goal. The gray plain in front of us was covered at this point by irregular hummocks and tall projections, which told us that the great city of old lay beneath it. It would all have been completely buried forever by the ooze, as Herculaneum has been by lava or Pompeii by ashes, had an entrance to it not been excavated by the survivors of the temple.

"This entrance was a long, downward cutting which ended up in a broad street with buildings exposed on either side. The walls of these buildings were occasionally cracked and shattered, for they were not of the solid construction which had preserved the temple, but the interiors were in most cases exactly as they had been when the catastrophe occurred, save that sea changes of all sorts, beautiful and rare in some cases and horrifying in others, had modified the appearance of the rooms.

"Our guides did not encourage us to examine the first ones which we reached, but hurried us onward until we came to that which had clearly been the great central citadel or palace round which the whole town centered. The pillars and columns and vast sculptured cornices and friezes and staircases of this building exceeded anything which I have ever seen upon earth. Its nearest approach seemed to me to be the remains of the Temple of Karnak at Luxor in Egypt and, strange to say, the decorations and half-effaced engravings resembled in detail those of the great ruin beside the Nile, and the lotus-shaped capitals of the columns were the same.

"It was an amazing experience to stand in the marble tessellated floors of those vast halls, with great statues looming high above one on every side, and to see, as we saw that day, huge silvery eels gliding above our heads and frightened fish darting away in every direction from the light which was projected before us. From room to room we wandered, marking every sign of luxury and occasionally of that lascivious folly which is said, by the lingering legend, to have drawn God's curse upon the people

"One small room was wonderfully enameled with mother-of-pearl, so that even now it gleamed with brilliant opalescent tints when the light played across it. An ornamented platform of yellow metal and a broken couch lay in one corner, and one felt that it may well have been the bedchamber of a queen; but beside the couch there lay now a loathsome black squid, its foul body rising and falling in a slow, stealthy rhythm, so that it seemed like some evil heart which still beat in the very center of the wicked palace.

"I was glad—and so, I learned, were my companions when our guides led the way out once more, glancing for a moment at a ruined amphitheater and again at a pier with a lighthouse at the end, which showed that the city had been a seaport. Soon we had emerged from these places of ill omen and were out on the familiar bathybian plain once more.

"Our adventures were not quite over, for there was one more which was as alarming to our companions as to ourselves. We had nearly made our way home when one of our guides pointed upward with alarm. Gazing in that direction, we saw an extraordinary sight. Out of the black gloom of the waters a huge dark figure was emerging, falling rapidly downward. At first it seemed a shapeless mass, but as it came more clearly into the light we could see that it was the dead body of a monstrous fish, which had burst so that the entrails were streaming up behind it as it fell No doubt the gases had buoyed it up in the higher reaches of the ocean until, having been released by putrefaction or by the ravages of sharks, there was nothing left but dead weight, which sent it hurtling down to the bottom of the sea.

"Already in our walk we had observed several of these great skeletons picked clean by the fish, but this creature was still, save for its disembowelment, even as it had lived. Our guides seized us with the intention of dragging us out of the path of the falling mass, but presently they were reassured and stood still, for it was clear that it would miss us.

"Our vitrine helmets prevented our hearing the thud, but it must have been prodigious when that huge body struck the floor of the ocean, and we saw the globigerina ooze fly up into the air as the mud splashes when a heavy stone is hurled into it. It was a sperm whale, some seventy feet long, and from the excited and joyful gestures of the submarine folk I gathered that they would find plenty of use for the spermaceti and the fat. For the moment, however, we left the derelict creature, and with joyful hearts, for we unpracticed visitors were weary and aching, we found ourselves once more in front of the engraved portal of the roof and finally standing safe and sound, divested of our vitrine bells, on the sloppy floor of the entrance chamber."

(TO BE CONCLUDED)

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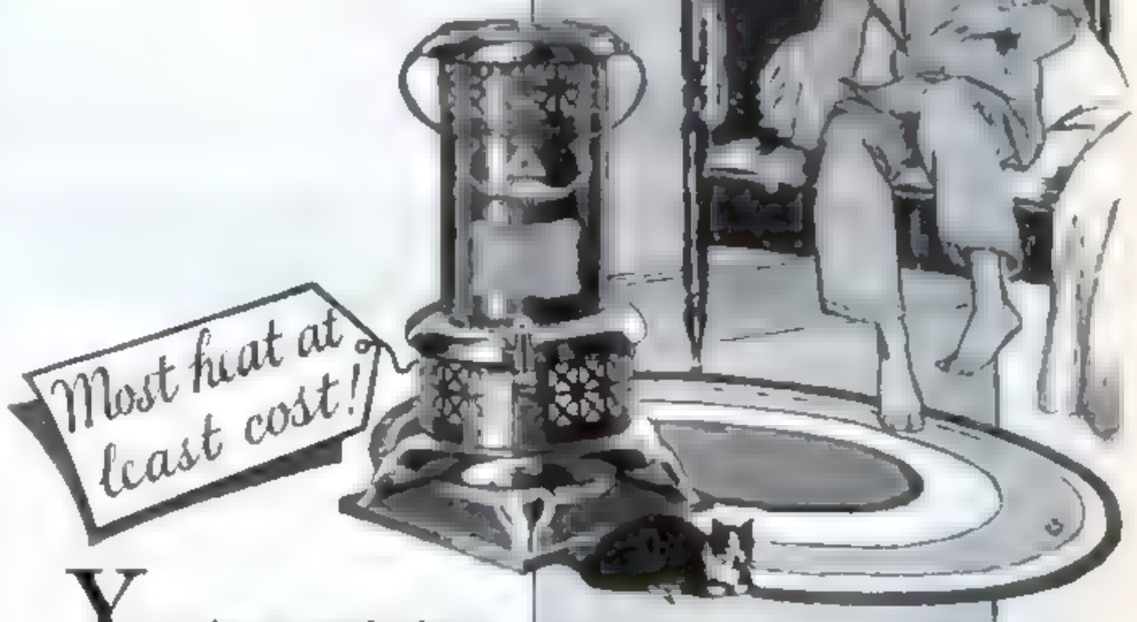

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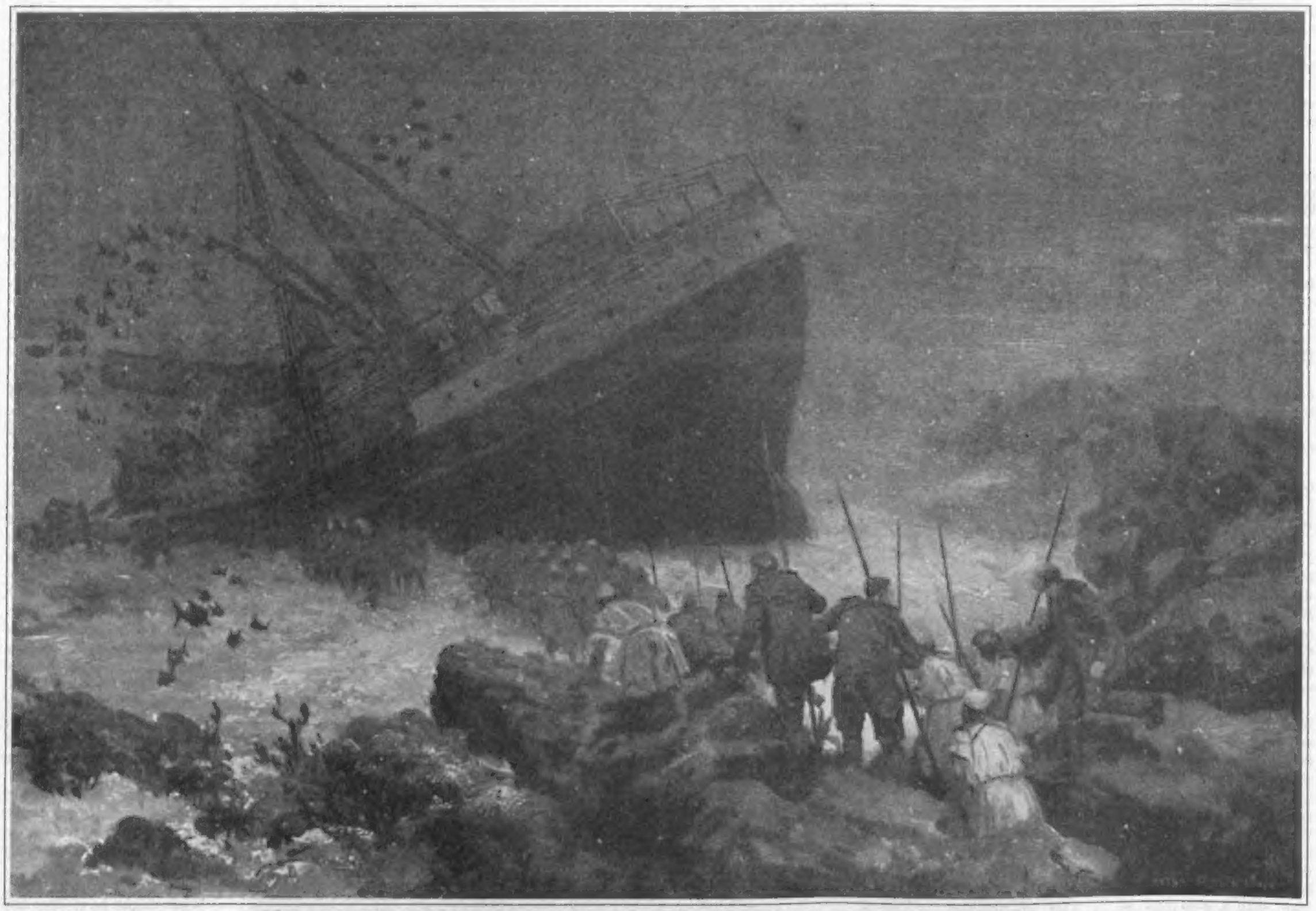
Duck, Al! Here's Another Open Letter—By Will Rogers

MARACOT DEEP

By Arthur Conan Doyle

ILLUSTRATED BY ANTON OTTO FISCHER



"Emerging From This Tangle of Ancient Lava, We Came Out on a Circular Plain, Brilliant in the Phosphorescent Light, and There in the Very Center of it Lay an Object Which Set Me Gasping"

IV

A FEW days—as we reckon time—after the occasion when we had given the community a cinema view of our own proceedings, we were present at a very much more solemn and august exhibition of the same sort, which gave us in a clear and wonderful way the past history of this remarkable people. I cannot flatter myself that it was given entirely on our behalf, for I rather think that the events were publicly rehearsed from time to time in order to carry on the record, and that the part to which we were admitted was only some intermezzo of a long religious ceremony. However that may be, I will describe it exactly as it occurred.

"We were led to the same great hall, or theater, where Doctor Maracot had thrown our own adventures upon the screen. There the whole community was assembled, and we were given, as before, places of honor in front of the great luminous screen.

"Then after a long song, which may have been some sort of patriotic chant, a very old, white-haired man, the historian or chronicler of the nation, advanced amid much applause to the focal point and threw upon the bright surface before him a series of pictures to represent the rise and fall of his own people.

"I wish I could convey to you their vividness and drama. My two companions and I lost all sense of time and place, so absorbed were we in the contemplation, while the audience was moved to its depths and groaned or wept as the tragedy unfolded which depicted the ruin of their fatherland, the destruction of their race.

"In the first series of scenes we saw the old continent in its glory, as its memory had been handed down by these historical records passed from fathers to sons. We had a bird's-eye view of a glorious rolling country, enormous in extent, well watered and cleverly irrigated, with great fields of grain, waving orchards, lovely streams and woody hills, still lakes and occasional picturesque mountains. It was studded with villages and covered with farmhouses and beautiful private residences.

"Then our attention was carried to the capital, a wonderful and gorgeous city upon the seashore, the harbor crammed with galleys, her quays piled with merchandise and her safety assured by high walls with towering battlements and circular moats, all on the most gigantic scale. The houses stretched inland for many miles, and in the center of the city was a crenelated castle, or citadel, so widespread and commanding that it was like some creation of a dream. We were then shown the faces of those who lived in that golden age, wise and venerable old men, virile warriors, saintly priests, beautiful and dignified women, lovely children—an apotheosis of the human race.

"Then came pictures of another sort. We saw wars, constant wars, war by land and war by sea. We saw naked and defenseless races trampled down and overridden by great chariots or the rush of mailed horsemen. We saw treasure heaped upon the victors, but even as the riches increased, the faces upon the screen became more animal and more cruel. Down, down they sank from one generation to another. We were shown signs of lascivious dissipation or moral degeneracy, of the accretion of matter and decline of spirit. Brutal sports at the expense of others had taken the place of the manly exercises of old.

"There was no longer the quiet and simple family life or the cultivation of the mind, but we had a glimpse of a people who were restless and shallow, rushing from one pursuit to another, grasping ever at pleasure, forever missing it, and yet imagining always that in some more complex and unnatural form it might still be found. There had risen on the one hand an overrich class who sought only sensual gratification, and on the other hand an overpoor residue whose whole function in life was to minister to the wants of their masters, however evil those wants might be.

"And now once again a new note was struck. There were reformers at work who were trying to turn the nation from its evil ways, and to direct it back into those higher paths which it had forsaken. We saw them, grave and earnest men, reasoning and pleading with the people, but we saw them scorned and jeered at by those whom they were trying to save. Especially we could see that it was the priests of Baal, priests who had gradually allowed forms and show and outward ceremonies to take the place of unselfish spiritual development, who led the opposition to the reformers. But the latter were not to be bullied or browbeaten. They continued to try for the salvation of the people, and their faces assumed a graver and even a terror-inspiring aspect as those of men who had a fearsome warning to give which was like some dreadful vision before their own minds. Of their auditors, some few seemed to heed and be terrified at the words, but others turned away laughing, and plunged ever deeper into their morass of sin. There came a time at last when the reformers turned away also, as men who could do no more, and left this degenerate people to its fate.

"Then we saw a strange sight. There was one reformer, a man of singular strength of mind and body, who gave a lead to all the others. He had wealth and influence and powers, which latter seemed to be not entirely of this earth. We saw him in what seemed to be a trance, communing with higher spirits. It was he who brought all the science of his land—science which far outshone anything known by us moderns—to the task of building an ark of refuge against the coming troubles.

"We saw myriads of workmen at work, and the walls rising, while crowds of careless citizens looked on and made merry at such elaborate and useless precautions. We saw

others who seemed to reason with him and to say to him that if he had fears, it would be easier for him to fly to some safer land. His answer, so far as we could follow it, was that there were some who must be saved at the last moment and that for their sake he must remain in the new temple of safety. Meanwhile he collected in it those who had followed him, and he held them there, for he did not himself know the day or the hour, though forces beyond mortal had assured him of the coming fact. So when the ark was ready and the water-tight doors were finished and tested, he waited upon doom, with his family, his friends, his followers and his servants.

"And doom came. It was a terrible thing even in a picture. God knows what it could be like in reality. We first saw a huge, sleek mountain of water rise to an incredible height out of a calm ocean. Then we saw it travel, sweeping on and on, mile after mile, a great glistening hill, topped with foam, at an ever-increasing rate. Two little chips tossed among the snowy fringe upon the summit, became, as the wave rolled toward us, a couple of shattered galleys.

"Then we saw it strike the shore and sweep over the city, while the houses went down before it like a field of corn before a tornado. We saw the folk upon the housetops, glaring out at the approaching death, their faces twisted with horror, their eyes staring, their mouths contorted, gnawing at their hands and gibbering in an insanity of terror. The very men and women who had mocked at the warning were now screaming to heaven for mercy, grovelling with their faces on the ground or kneeling with frenzied arms raised in wild appeal.

"There was no time now to reach the ark, which stood beyond the city, but thousands dashed up to the citadel, which stood upon higher ground, and the battlement walls were black with people. Then suddenly the castle began to sink. Everything began to sink. The water had poured down into the remote recesses of the earth, the central fires had expanded it into steam and the very foundations of the land were blown apart.

"Down went the city, and ever down, while a cry went up from ourselves and the audience at the terrible sight. The pier broke in two and vanished. The high pharos collapsed under the waves. The roofs looked for a while like successive reefs of rock forming lines of spouting breakers until they, too, went under. The citadel was left alone upon the surface, like some monstrous ship, and then it also slid sideways down into the abyss, with a fringe of helpless waving hands upon its summit.

"The awful drama was over and an unbroken sea lay across the whole continent—a sea which bore no life upon it, but which, among its huge smoking swirls and eddies, showed all the wrack of the tragedy tossed hither and thither—dead men and animals, chairs, tables, articles of clothing, floating hats and bales of goods, all bobbing and heaving in one huge liquid fermentation. Slowly we saw it die away and a great wide expanse as smooth and bright as quicksilver, with a murky sun low on the horizon, showed us the grave of the land that God had weighed and found wanting.

"The story was complete. We could ask for no more, since our own brains and imagination could supply the rest. We realized the slow, remorseless descent of that great land lower and lower into the abyss of the ocean amid volcanic convulsions which threw up submarine peaks around it. We saw it in our mind's eye stretched out over miles of what was now the bed of the Atlantic, the shattered city lying alongside of the ark of refuge in which the handful of nerve-shattered survivors were assembled. And then finally we understood how these had carried on their lives, how they had used the various devices with which the foresight and science of their great leader had endowed them, how he had taught them all his arts before he passed away, and how some fifty or sixty survivors had grown now into a large community, which had to dig its way into the bowels of the earth in order to get room to expand.

"No library of information could make it clearer than that series of pictures and the inferences which we could draw from them. Such was the fate, and such the causes of the fate, which overwhelmed the great land of Atlantis. Some day far distant, when this bathybian ooze has turned to chalk, this great city will be thrown up once more by some fresh expiration of Nature and the geologist of the future, delving in the quarry, will exhume not flints or shells, but the remains of a vanished civilization and the traces of an Old World catastrophe.

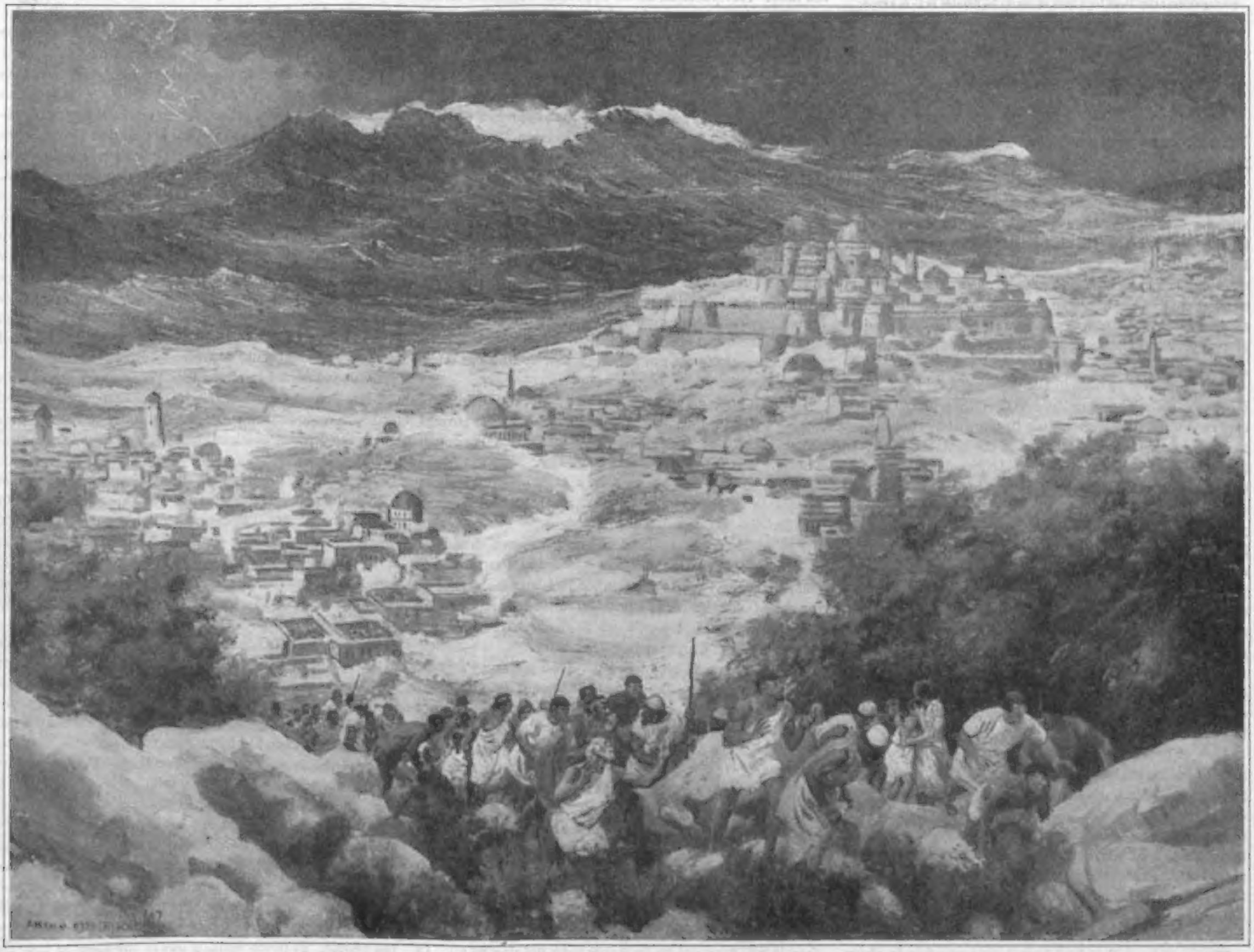
"Only one point had remained undecided and that was the length of time since the tragedy had occurred. Doctor Maracot discovered a rough method of making an estimate. Among the many annexes of the great building, there was one huge vault which was the burial place of the chiefs. As in Egypt and in Yucatan, the practice of mummifying had been usual, and in niches in the walls there were endless rows of these grim relics of the past. Manda pointed proudly to the next one in the succession and gave us to understand that it was specially arranged for himself.

"'If you take an average of the European kings,' said Maracot, in his best professorial manner, 'you will find that they run to about five in the century. We may adopt the same figure here. We cannot hope for scientific accuracy, but it will give us an approximation. I have counted the mummies and they are four hundred in number.'

"'Then it would be eight thousand years.'

"'Exactly. And this agrees to some extent with Plato's estimate. It certainly occurred before the Egyptian written records begin, and they go back between six and seven

(Continued on Page 51)



"We First Saw a Huge, Sleek Mountain of Water Rise to an Incredible Height Out of a Calm Ocean. Then We Saw it Travel, Sweeping on and on, Mile After Mile, a Great Glistening Hill, Topped With Foam, at an Ever-Increasing Rate"

MARACOT DEEP

(Continued from Page 23)

thousand years from the present date. Yes, I think we may say that our eyes have seen the reproduction of a tragedy which occurred eight thousand years ago. But of course, to build up a civilization such as we see the traces of must in itself have taken many thousands of years. Thus,' he concluded—'and I pass the claim on to you—we have extended the horizon of ascertained human history as no men have ever done since history began.'

"It was about a month, according to our calculations, after our visit to the buried city that the most amazing and unexpected thing of all occurred. We had thought by this time that we were immune to shocks and that nothing new could really stagger us, but this actual fact went far beyond anything for which our imagination might have prepared us.

"It was Scanlan who brought the news that something momentous had happened. You must realize that by this time we were, to some extent, at home in the great building; that we knew where the common rest rooms and recreation rooms were situated; that we attended concerts—their music was very strange and elaborate—and theatrical entertainments, where the unintelligible words were translated by very vivid and dramatic gestures; and that, speaking generally, we were part of the community.

"We visited various families in their own private rooms, and our lives—I can speak for my own, at any rate—were made the brighter by the glamour of these strange people, especially of that one dear young lady whose name I have already mentioned. Mona was the daughter of one of the leaders of the tribe, and I found in his family a warm and kindly welcome which rose above all differences of race or language. When it comes to the most tender language of all, I did not find that there was so much difference between old Atlantis and modern America. I guess that what would please a New England girl of Brown's College is just about what would please my lady under the waves.

"But I must get back to the fact that Scanlan came into our room with news of some great happening.

"'Say, there is one of them just blown in, and he's that excited that he clean forgot to take his glass top off, and he was jabbering for some minutes before he understood that no one could hear him. Then it was blah-blah-blah as long as his breath would hold, and they are all following him now to the jumping-off place. It's me for the water, for there is sure something worth our seeing.'

"Running out, we found our friends all hurrying down the corridor with excited gestures, and we, joining the procession, soon formed part of the crowd who were hurrying across the sea bottom, led by the excited messenger. They drove along at a rate which made it no easy matter for us to keep up, but they carried their electric lanterns with them, and even though we fell behind, we were able to follow the gleam.

"The route lay as before, along the base of the basalt cliffs until we came to a spot where a set of steps, concave from long usage, led up to the top. Ascending these, we found ourselves in broken country, with many jagged pinnacles of rock and deep crevasses which made it difficult traveling. Emerging from this tangle of ancient lava, we came out on a circular plain, brilliant in the phosphorescent light, and there in the very center of it lay an object which set me gasping. As I looked at my companions, I could see from their amazed expression how fully they shared my emotion.

"Half embedded in the slime, there lay a good-sized steamer. It was tilted upon its side; the funnel had broken and was hanging at a strange angle, and the foremast had snapped short off, but otherwise the vessel was intact and as clean and fresh as if she had just left the dock. We hurried toward her and found ourselves under the stern. You can imagine how we felt when we read the name Stratford, London. Our ship had followed ourselves into the Maracot Deep.

"Of course, after the first shock, the affair did not seem so incomprehensible. We remembered the falling glass, the reefed sails of the experienced Norwegian skipper, the strange black cloud upon the horizon. Clearly there had been a sudden cyclone of phenomenal severity and the Stratford had been blown over. It was too evident that all her people were dead, for most of the boats were trailing in different states of destruction from the davits, and in any case, what boat could live in such a hurricane?

"The tragedy had occurred, no doubt, within an hour or two of our own disaster. Perhaps the sounding line which we had seen had only just been wound in before the blow fell. It was terrible, but whimsical that we should be still alive while those who were mourning our destruction had themselves been destroyed. We had no means of telling whether the ship had drifted in the upper levels of the ocean or whether she had lain for some time where we found her before she was discovered by the Atlantean.

"Poor Howie, the captain, or what was left of him, was still at his post upon the bridge, the rail grasped firmly in his stiffened hands. His body and those of three stokers in the engine room were the only ones which had sunk with the ship. They were removed under our direction and buried under the ooze, with a wreath of sea flowers over their remains. I give this detail in the hope that it may be some comfort to Mrs. Howie in her bereavement. The names of the stokers were unknown to us.

"While we had been performing this duty the little men had swarmed over the ship. Looking up, we saw them everywhere, like mice upon a cheese. Their excitement and curiosity made it clear to us that it was the first modern ship—possibly the first steamer—which had ever come down to them. We found out later that their oxygen apparatus inside their vitrine bells would not allow of a longer absence from the recharging station than a few hours, and so their chances of learning anything of what was on the sea bed were limited to so many miles from their central base. They set to work at once breaking up the wreck and removing all that would be of use to them, a very long process, which is hardly accomplished yet. We were glad also to make our way to our cabins and to get many of those articles of clothing and books which were not ruined beyond redemption.

"Among the other things which we rescued from the Stratford was the ship's log, which had been written up to the last day by the captain in view of our own catastrophe. It was strange, indeed, that we should be reading it and that he should be dead. The day's entry ran thus:

"'Oct. 3: The three brave but foolhardy adventurers have today, against my will and advice, descended in their apparatus to the bottom of the ocean, and the accident which I had foreseen has occurred. God rest their souls. They went down at eleven A.M. and I had some doubts about permitting them, as a squall seemed to be coming up. I would that I had acted upon my impulse, but it would only have postponed the inevitable tragedy. I bade each of them farewell with the conviction that I would see them no more.

"'For a time all was well, and at 11:45 they had reached a depth of 300 fathoms, where they had found bottom. Doctor Maracot sent several messages to me and all seemed to be in order, when suddenly I heard his voice in agitation, and there was considerable jerking of the wire hawser. An instant later it snapped. It would appear that they were by this time over a deep chasm, for at the doctor's request the ship had steamed very slowly forward. The air tubes continued to run out for a distance which I should estimate at half a mile, and then they also snapped. It is the last which we can ever hope to hear of Doctor Maracot, Mr. Headley or Mr. Scanlan.

"'And yet a most extraordinary thing must be recorded, the meaning of which I have not had time to weigh, for with this foul weather coming up there is much to distract me. A deep-sea sounding was taken at the same time, and the depth recorded was 27,600 feet. The weight was, of course, left at the bottom, but the wire has just been drawn in, and incredible as it may seem, above the porcelain sample cup there was found Mr. Headley's handkerchief with his name marked upon it. The ship's company are all amazed and no one can suggest how such a thing could have occurred. In my next entry I may have more to say about this. We have lingered a few hours in the hope of something coming to the surface, and we have pulled up the hawser, which shows a jagged end. Now I must look to the ship, for I have never seen a worse sky and the barometer is at 28.5 and sinking fast.'

"So it was that we got the final news of our former companions. A terrific cyclone must have struck the ship and destroyed her immediately afterward.

"We stayed at the wreck until a certain stuffiness within our vitrine bells and a feeling of increasing weight upon our chests warned us that it was high time to begin our return. Then it was, on our homeward journey, that we had an adventure which showed us the sudden dangers to which these submarine folk are exposed, and which may explain why their numbers, in spite of the lapse of time, were not greater than they were. Including the Grecian slaves, we cannot reckon those numbers at more than four or five thousand at the most.

"We had descended the staircase and were making our way along the edge of the jungle which skirts the basalt cliffs, when Manda pointed excitedly upward and beckoned furiously to one of our party who was some distance out in the open. At the same time he and those around him ran to the side of some high bowlders, pulling us along with them. It was only when we were in their shelter that we saw the cause of the alarm.

"Some distance above us, but descending rapidly, was a huge fish of a most peculiar shape. It might have been a great floating feather bed, soft and bulging, with a white under surface and a long red fringe, the vibration of which propelled it through the water. It appeared to have neither mouth nor eyes, but it soon showed that it was formidably alert. The member of our party who was out in the open ran for the same shelter that we had taken, but he was too late. I saw his face convulsed with terror as he realized his fate. The horrible creature descended upon him, enveloped him on all sides and lay upon him, pulsing in a dreadful way as if it were thrusting his body against the coral rocks and grinding it to pieces.

"The tragedy was taking place within a few yards of us, and yet our companions were so overcome by the suddenness of it that they seemed to be bereft of all power of action. It was Scanlan who rushed out, and jumping on the creature's broad back blotched with red and brown markings, dug the sharp end of his metal staff into its soft tissues. I had followed Scanlan's example, and finally Maracot and all of them attacked the monster, which glided slowly off, leaving a trail of oily and glutinous excretion behind it.

"Our help had come too late, however, for the impact of the great fish had broken the vitrine bell of the Atlantean and he had

Watch This Column

Our Weekly Letter

Scene from

"The Chinese Parrot"

Earl Derr Biggers' Saturday Evening Post Story in a Universal Picture

The manager of your favorite moving-picture theatre can't always guess the state of your mind nor what kind of pictures you would like to see. A little cooperation from you will work wonders for both.

In a sense you are just as deeply interested in his theatre as he is himself. The more suggestions you offer him, the better he is satisfied. *You* are the customer, and the more you are pleased, the more money he will make.

If you want to see a UNIVERSAL PICTURE to which you have been attracted, you ought to tell him so by post card or telephone or, better still, in person when you visit his theatre. He can't assume that he knows what you want, but he will have to *guess* if you don't let him know.

A movie-theatre and the neighborhood around it form a Community of Interest. It ought to be a Cooperative Community for the sake of mutual interest.

If you follow this column, you know the big things UNIVERSAL is doing, such as ***"Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Les Miserables," "The Cat and the Canary."*** If you want to see the UNIVERSAL LIST for Fall and Winter—the great spectacles, the absorbing dramas, the splendid comedies produced, why not let the Manager of your Theatre know you want to see them? It will certainly please him and you will get what you want in your own neighborhood.

If you will drop me a line I will give you the list of forthcoming UNIVERSALS. It will be your guide to a season of unparalleled entertainment.

Carl Laemmle
President

(To be continued next week)

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been drowned. It was a day of mourning when we carried his body back into the temple, but it was also a day of triumph for us, for our prompt action had raised us greatly in the estimation of our companions.

"As to the strange fish, we had Doctor Maracot's assurance that it was a specimen of the blanket fish well-known to ichthyologists, but of a size such as had never entered into his dreams.

"I speak of this creature because it chanced to bring about a tragedy, but I could, and perhaps will, write a book upon the wonderful life which we have seen here. Many of the marine forms are of surpassing loveliness, and others so grotesque in their horror that they are like the images of delirium and of a danger such as no land animal can rival.

"I have seen a black sting ray thirty feet long with a horrible fang upon its tail, one blow of which would kill any living creature. I have seen, too, a froglike beast with protruding green eyes, which is simply a gaping mouth with a huge stomach behind it. To meet it is death unless one has an electric flash with which to repel it. I have seen the blind red eel which lies among the rocks and kills by the emission of poison, and I have seen also the giant sea scorpion, one of the terrors of the deep, and the hagfish which lurks among the sea jungle.

"Once, too, it was my privilege to see the real sea serpent, a creature which has seldom appeared before the human eye, for it lives in the extreme depths and is seen on the surface only when some submarine convulsion has driven it out of its haunts. Two of them swam—or rather, glided—past us one day while Mona and I cowered among the bunches of lamellaria. They were enormous—some ten feet in height and two hundred in length, black above, silver-white below, with a high fringe upon the back, and small eyes no larger than those of an ox.

"Week glided into week in our new life. It had become a very pleasant one, and we were slowly picking up enough of this long-forgotten tongue to enable us to converse a little with our companions. There were endless subjects both for study and for amusement in the temple, and already Maracot has mastered so much of the old chemistry that he declares he can revolutionize all worldly ideas if he can only transmit his knowledge.

"Among other things, they have learned to split the atom, and though the energy released is less than our scientists had anticipated, it is still sufficient to supply them with a great reservoir of power. Their acquaintance with the power and nature of the ether is also far ahead of ours, and indeed that strange translation of thought into pictures by which we had told them our story and they theirs was due to an etheric impression translated back into terms of matter.

"And yet, in spite of their knowledge, there were points connected with modern scientific developments which had been overlooked by their ancestors.

"It was left to Scanlan to demonstrate the fact. For weeks he was in a state of suppressed excitement, bursting with some great secret and chuckling continually at his own thoughts. We saw him only occasionally during this time, for he was extremely busy, and his one friend and confidant was a fat and jovial Atlantean named Berbrix, who was in charge of some of the machinery. Scanlan and Berbrix, though their intercourse was carried on chiefly by signs and mutual back-slapping, had become very close friends and were now continually closeted together.

"One evening Scanlan came in radiant. 'Look here, doc,' he said to Maracot, 'I've a dope of my own that I want to hand to these folk. They've shown us a thing or two, and I figure that it is up to us to return it. What's the matter with calling them together tomorrow night for a show?'

"'Jazz, or the Charleston?' I asked.

"'Charleston nothing! Wait till you see it! Man, it's the greatest stunt—but there, I won't say a word more. Just this, bo: I won't let you down, for I've got the goods, and I mean to deliver them.'

"Accordingly the community were assembled next evening in the familiar hall. Scanlan and Berbrix were on the platform beaming with pride. One or other of them touched a button, and then—well, to use Scanlan's own language: 'I hand it to him, for he did some surprise us!'

"'2.L.O. speaking,' cried a clear voice. 'London speaking to the British Isles. Weather forecast.' Then followed the usual sentence about depressions and anticyclones. 'First News Bulletin. Copyright by Reuter, Daily Telegraph and Associated Press. His Majesty the King this morning opened the new wing of the Children's Hospital in Hammersmith ——' And so on and on, in the familiar strain. For the first time we were back in a workaday England. Then we heard the foreign news, the sporting news. The old world was droning on the same as ever. Our friends the Atlanteans listened in amazement, but without comprehension. When, however, as the first item after the news, the Guards' Band struck up the march from Lohengrin, a positive shout of delight broke from the people, and it was funny to see them rush upon the platform and turn over the curtains and look behind the screens to find the source of the music. Yes, we have left our mark forever upon the submarine civilization.

"'No, sir,' said Scanlan afterward, 'I could not make a distributing station. They haven't the material and I haven't the brains. But down at home I rigged a two-valve set of my own with the aerial beside the clothesline in the yard, and I learned to handle it and to pick up any station in the States. It seemed to me funny if, with all this electricity to hand, and with their glass work ahead of ours, we couldn't vamp up something that would catch an ether wave, and a wave would sure travel through water just as easy as through air. Old Berbrix nearly threw a fit when we got the first call, but he is wise to it now, and I guess it's a permanent institution.'

"Among the discoveries of the Atlantean chemists is a gas which is nine times lighter than hydrogen and which Maracot has named levigen. It was his experiments with this which gave us the idea of sending glass balls with information as to our fate to the surface of the ocean.

"'I have made Manda understand the idea,' said he. 'He has given orders to the silica workers, and in a day or two the globes will be ready.'

"'But how can we get our news inside?' I asked.

"'There is a small aperture left through which the gas is inserted. Into this we can push the papers. Then these skillful workers can seal up the hole. I am assured that when we release them they will shoot up to the surface.'

"'And bob about unseen for a year.'

"'That might be. But the ball would reflect the sun's rays. It would surely attract attention. We were on the line of shipping between Europe and South America. I see no reason why, if we send several, one at least may not be found.'

"And this, my dear Talbot, or you others who read this narrative, is how it comes into your hands. But a far more fateful scheme may lie behind it. The idea came from the fertile brain of the American mechanic.

"'Say, friends,' said he, as we sat alone in our chamber, 'it's dandy down here, and the drink is good and the eats are good, and I've met a wren that makes anything in Philadelphia look like two cents, but all the same there are times when I want to feel that I might see God's own country once more.'

"'We may all feel that way,' said I, 'but I don't see how you can hope to make it.'

"'Looka here, bo, if these balls of gas could carry up our message, maybe they could carry us up also. Don't think I'm joshing, for I've figured it out to rights. We will suppose we put three or four of them together so as to get a good lift, see? Then we have our vitrine bells on and harness ourselves onto the balls. When the bell rings we cut loose and up we go. What is going to stop us between here and the surface?'

"'A shark, maybe.'

"'Blah! Sharks nothing! We would streak past any shark so's he'd hardly know we was there. He'd think we was three flashes of light and we'd get such a lick on that we'd shoot fifty feet up in the air at the other end. I tell you the goof that sees us come up is going to say his prayers over it.'

"'But suppose it is possible, what will happen afterwards?'

"'For Pete's sake, leave afterwards out of it! Let's chance our luck or we are here for keeps. It's me for cutting loose and having a dash at it.'

"'I certainly greatly desire to return to the world, if only to lay our results before the learned societies,' said Maracot. 'It is only my personal influence which can make them realize the fund of new knowledge which I have acquired. I should be quite in favor of any such attempt as Scanlan has indicated.'

"Perhaps the bright eyes of Mona prejudiced my judgment, but I was the least eager of the three. 'It would be perfect madness as you propose it. Unless we had someone expecting us on the surface, we should infallibly drift about and perish from hunger and thirst.'

"'Shucks, man, how could we have someone expecting us?'

"'Perhaps even that could be managed,' said Maracot. 'We can give within a mile or two the exact latitude and longitude of our position.'

"'And they would let down a ladder,' said I, with some bitterness.

"'Ladder nothing! The boss is right. See here, Mr. Headley, you put in that letter that you are going to send the universe—my, don't I see the scare lines in the journals!—that we are at 27 north latitude and 28.14 west longitude, or whatever other figure is the right one. Got that? Then you say that three of the most important folk in history—the great man of science Maracot, and the rising star bug collector Headley, and Bill Scanlan, a peach of a mechanic and the pride of Merribank's—are all yellin' and whoopin' for help from the bottom of the sea. Follow my idee?'

"'Well, what then?'

"'Well, then it's up to them, you see. It's kind of a challenge that they can't forget. Same as I've read of Stanley finding Livingstone, and the like. It's for them to find some way to yank us out or to catch us at the other end if we can take the jump ourselves.'

"'We could suggest the way ourselves,' said the professor. 'Let them drop a deep-sea line into these waters and we will look out for it. When it comes we can tie a message to it and bid them stand by for us.'

"'You've said a mouthful!' cried Bill Scanlan. 'That's sure the way to do it.'

"'And if any lady cared to share our fortunes, four would be as easy as three,' said Maracot, with a roguish smile at me.

"'For that matter, five is as easy as four,' said Scanlan. 'But you've got it now, Mr. Headley. You write that down, and in six months we shall be back in London river once more.'

"So now we launch our two balls into that water which is to us what the air is to you. Our two little balloons will go aloft. Will both be lost on the way? It is possible. Or may we hope that one will get through? We leave it on the knees of the gods. If nothing can be done for us, then let those who care for us know that in any case we are safe and happy. If, on the other hand, this suggestion could be carried out and the money and energy for our rescue should be forthcoming, we have given you the means by which it can be done. Meanwhile, good-by—or is it *au revoir?*"

So ended the narrative in the vitrine ball.

(THE END)